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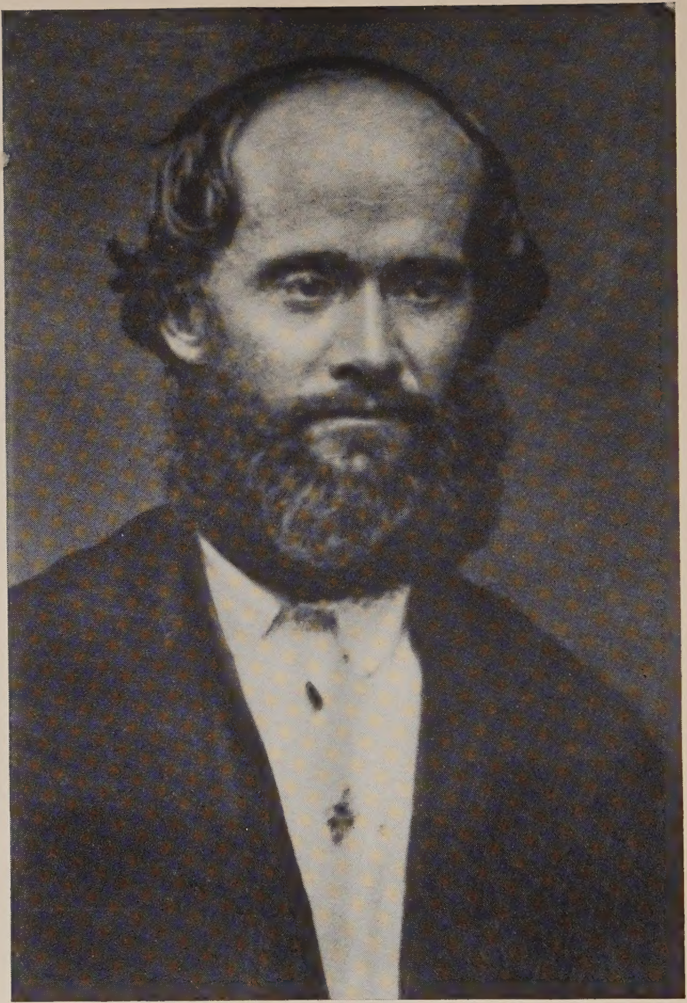

JAMES J. STRANG

From a daguerreotype taken in 1854 or later. Reproduced by courtesy of Roscoe B. Martin and Charles M. Reed.

The Kingdom of Saint James

A Narrative of the Mormons

BY MILO M. QUAIFE

Secretary, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit

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The Kingdom of St. James

CHAPTER I

The Calling of a Prophet

IT was the month of February, 1844. On the eastern bank of the Father of Waters lay the mushroom city of Nauvoo, sprung in half a dozen years from an open prairie to the metropolis of Illinois. Over it ruled supreme the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, prophet, seer, revelator, and translator. For a decade and a half he had been laboring to build up a new kingdom of God on earth. To the distant corners of the globe missions had gone out in true apostolic fashion, without scrip or purse, burning with zeal for the faith, to preach the new gospel of the dispensation of the fulness of times. Marvelously successful had they been. In the face of ridicule and social ostracism, despite persecution and mobbing, the numbers of believers steadily increased. Nauvoo was a true *imperium in imperio*. To Smith had been granted, by a complacent state legislature, a city charter which still stands unique in American municipal annals. With a military title such as no other American save the immortal Washington had ever held, he commanded a body of soldiery more numerous and better drilled than any the sovereign state of Illinois itself possessed. And now he was waging a campaign to obtain for himself the presidency of the United States.

To Nauvoo by river and by stagecoach route came a steady stream of travelers; pilgrims from other states and from foreign lands, journeying to the city appointed by God for the gathering of his saints; unbelieving gentiles, on secular missions bent; curious tourists, intent merely on sight-seeing; and honest doubters, come to investigate at first hand the pretensions of the new religion. One of the latter class was James J. Strang, a young lawyer from Burlington, Wisconsin. Since he was to become the Alpha and Omega of the Kingdom of St. James, he will repay our careful scrutiny. To recover after the lapse of a century and more of time the common facts about the life history of an obscure individual is ordinarily a difficult, if not impossible, task. Fortunately, in the present instance, our subject has left behind a considerable mass of manuscripts, together with an extensive body of material in print, dealing with his personal and public career. From these we may draw not merely the obvious biographical facts which the writer consciously set down, but also much important indirect information upon the character and idiosyncrasies of the future prophet and king.*

Jesse James Strang, or James Jesse Strang as he was known in after life,† was born on Poplar Ridge Road, in the town of Scipio, Cayuga County, New York, March 21,

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* The records alluded to will be described more at length in succeeding footnotes. The account of Strang's earlier years which immediately follows is chiefly derived from two documents, a fragmentary autobiography and a like fragmentary diary. The autobiography was begun by Strang in 1855, the year before his tragic death. The manuscript terminates abruptly, in the middle of a sentence, before the story of its author's childhood has been concluded. For it see Henry E. Legler, *A Moses of the Mormons* (Milwaukee: *Parkman Club Publications*, Nos. 15 and 16, 1897). The diary (or as much of it as has escaped destruction) was kept by Strang during the years 1831–36. A half dozen years since it was in the possession of Henry Denio of Lamoni, Iowa, a grandson of Strang, from whom the present writer secured the loan of it for the purpose of studying and copying. The notebook in which the diary was kept was much worn and mutilated. The surviving portion of the diary is printed for the first time, *post*, as Appendix II.

† In the diary Strang frequently wrote his name across the top of the page. In 1831 this entry is uniformly "Jesse J. Strang." Beginning with the following year the forms "Jesse J." and "James J." are intermixed, until in 1834 only the latter form appears. The maiden name of Strang's mother was James, her father being Jesse James. Thus it is apparent that Strang was named for his maternal grandfather, and that beginning about the year 1832 he gradually reversed the order of his given names.

A somewhat curious reflection occurs in this connection. In the Strangite

1813. His childhood was one prolonged period of illness, so much so that until he had children of his own, "happy in their infantile gambols," the recollection of his early years "produced a kind of creeping sensation akin to terror." Like his parents before him, Strang was slight of frame and short of stature. In contrast to his sickly body (which he seems to have outgrown in later years) his intellectual endowment was unusual. In childhood his teachers and other acquaintances regarded him as mentally incompetent, "little more than idiotic"; but this judgment seems to have been erroneously derived from his physical condition.

> Long weary days I sat upon the floor [he records in the autobiography], thinking, thinking, thinking! Occasionally asking a strange uninfantile question and never getting an answer. My mind wandered over fields that old men shrink from, seeking rest and finding none till darkness gathered thick around and I burst into tears and cried aloud, and with a voice scarcely able to articulate told my mother that my head ached.

This unusual mentality was matched by an unusual memory. To the end of life Strang distinctly recalled as one of childhood's few bright spots, his mother "carrying me in her arms, nursing me, and conversing with her sister about me." Before he was a year and a half old his parents removed to another community, yet so distinctly did he re-

Bible, the Book of the Law of the Lord, which purports to have been translated by Strang with divine aid from the "plates of Laban" which the ancient Jews kept in the Ark of the Covenant, verse 6 of chapter xx on the "Calling of a King" reads: "He hath chosen his servant James to be King; he hath established him a Prophet above the kings of the earth; and appointed him king of Zion; by his own voice did he call him, and he sent his angels unto him to ordain him." Two alternative deductions from this statement are possible: either the divine author of the Law of the Lord did not know that the future king of the earth would be named Jesse by his parents; or the finite author of the reputed sacred record had forgotten, when composing it, that in earlier life he had gone by the name of Jesse rather than James Strang.

member the place of his birth that after an absence of twenty years he was able to recognize the location when riding through the place.

In February, 1816, when Strang was almost three years old, his parents removed to Hanover, Chautauqua County, New York. Here in a frontier community the child grew to manhood, and in this immediate vicinity his life was passed until his removal to Wisconsin in the early forties. The autobiography carries the story of his life to the age of twelve, and the diary takes it up at the age of eighteen. The missing period is of no great importance, for the career of a frontier farm boy from his twelfth to his eighteenth year can have furnished little worthy of positive record. In the miserable schools which the region then afforded Strang procured the bare rudiments of an education. To some men, however, is given the ability to acquire knowledge without the aid of formal schooling; Abraham Lincoln was one such person and Jesse J. Strang was another. The diary of his early manhood discloses a keen appetite for reading, and a taste for argumentation which amounted almost to a passion. The former found satisfaction in the reading of such papers and books as the community afforded, the latter in assiduous attendance upon debating societies and lyceums.

In these latter activities Strang trained himself in the arts of argumentation and public address. He seems easily to have outshone his associates in these exercises, and like Lincoln he became a master of invective and satire. On one occasion his opponent in debate accused Strang of "quoting history which [he] had never read and quoting it falsely." Strang replied with reasons calculated to show that he had read the passage in dispute and demanded that the accuser present his proofs. This elicited the somewhat remarkable proposition that one has the right to make any accusation he pleases, and it stands good until the accused has disproved it. Strang thereupon recorded in his diary his intention to "train" his opponent shortly; as the sequel, a few weeks later he recited before the debating society a poem in blank verse, reviewing the accuser's shortcomings in a manner so savage that even the author deemed it prudent not to recite the whole in public.* The youth who at eighteen had thus learned to excoriate a friend in playful debate, a few years later, provoked by a theological dispute, could pronounce a curse upon the inhabitants of an entire city, which after the lapse of fourscore years one can hardly read without a creeping of the flesh.

A result of Strang's reading and disputations of early manhood which seems strangely incongruous in view of his later career as a prophet was that he became a pronounced skeptic. Again a comparison with the life of Abraham Lincoln is in order, for at the same time Strang in western New York and Lincoln in central Illinois were reading Volney's *Ruins* and Paine's *Age of Reason*, and with like results. Lincoln discussed them with his associates in the village grocery, and Strang in his debating society, and both became freethinkers. The debating society in which Strang was active seems to have been a center of freethinking, for there are indications in the diary that the orthodox in the community sought to suppress it. Probably Strang was the leader of this liberal group, for in the spring of 1835 the godly-minded haled him before the grand jury on a charge of false swearing in connection with testimony given in a suit at law.* Then, the youth records,

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* The opening lines were as follows:

"To him who rides on slander's foaming steeds
Who loves to charge a friend with basest deeds
Who speaks for naught but wrathful vengeance wrong
Who hopes to rise by slander's blasting tongue."

> Forestville spit its venom in vain. Its highways and lanes and ditches were emptied to go and cry against me. All Hell was raked for false witness. Young men whose beards were not grown harangued the multitude. Old sinners whose feet trembled beneath their emaciated bodies and whose eyes stare horror-struck at the gaping grave appeared in open day and pleaded jurors to perjure themselves and ruin me. Clergymen and their pious followers prayed the overwhelming vengeance of the Allmighty on the heaven daring Infidel who[m] Providence had thrown in their power.

But the jury returned no indictment, and the "heaven daring Infidel" was left free to continue his scandalous way.

A few months later, while working around a mill race Strang fell into the swollen river and escaped drowning as by a miracle. His reflections during the brief space of time when, gasping for breath, he fought the mad current are faithfully recorded in the diary:

> Brief has been my life, for then I remembered it all; few are my friends, but none were forgotten; few also my enemies, but it was a melancholy thought that of the most relentless I was perhaps to die unavenged. [He pictured, too, his funeral obsequies.] Friends sobbing around; my poor, heartbroken mother sinking by my pale remains; those who in life had injured me deep as hatred could conceive or malice could invent standing in clusters round talking, perhaps that the hand of god had done it and then offering their consoling (ah! vile) assistance.

Evidently the iron had entered the soul of the youth who could indulge such reflections as these in the imminent presence of death.

During these early years the future prophet was outwardly occupied with teaching school, working on his father's farm, and studying law, the pursuit of which he entered upon during his twentieth year. Inwardly, his mind was a strange complex of conflicting ideals and ambitions. Already he had devised a system of cipher in which much of the diary is recorded. On his nineteenth birthday he reflects that he is "as yet no more than a common farmer. It is too bad. I ought to have been a member of Assembly or a Brigadier General before this time." But he has already made one great discovery, the key, there is much reason to think, to his future remarkable career: "That is that I am eager and mankind are frail," and "I shall act upon it for time to come for my own benefit." "My head is filled with projects," he writes a few months later. He hopes to form a literary association, and in addition a "mutual instruction military academy" for young militia officers. At the same time he is "only waiting for a printer" to begin publication of a "literary and scientifick journal." This project, however, is only of minor importance; it is to be undertaken merely to introduce the hopeful dreamer to the public.

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* The suit was over the title of his brother, David, to a piece of real estate.

Between engaging in the fur trade, speculating in the United States or in foreign countries, entering upon a military career, and other possible lines of activity, Strang's choice of a career finally settled upon the law. He took up its study determined to excel, but strangely diffident, for once, as to his ability to do so. He is willing to study seven years, if necessary, but if in the end he cannot excel he will take up a mercantile career; for he "would rather be the best hunter in an Indian tribe" than a commonplace member of the New York bar. He was admitted to the bar of Chautauqua County in October, 1836, and practiced law at Ellington, where he resided. But he did not follow his chosen profession very assiduously for during the next half-dozen years he served as village postmaster, temperance lecturer, and for two years as editor of the Randolph *Herald*.

Meanwhile a chain of circumstances had been slowly forging which was to transfer him from the community where he had spent his life thus far to the newer and rawer frontier of southern Wisconsin. In recent decades the name of Chautauqua has become far famed by reason of a certain type of religious-educational endeavor. Probably few people of the present generation are aware of the fact that long before the Chautauqua movement originated this vicinity was a prominent center of several new types of religious activity. In particular it was a stronghold of Mormonism, many of whose early converts were from Chautauqua County. Near by (in Allegany County) was the home of Sidney Rigdon both before and after his spectacular career as Joseph Smith's chief lieutenant. Jamestown, the county seat, was in 1833 an active center of the new faith, and Rigdon, its most fluent expositor, sojourned here for a time.* Strang's parents were charter members of one of the pioneer Baptist churches of the county, which they joined in 1817,† and this religious influence dominated his early years. A youth of his active mentality, however, could not remain ignorant of the manifestations of Mormonism in his own county. About the time he was admitted to the bar, indeed, he formed a marriage connection which brought him into close personal contact with the new faith. His bride was Mary Perce, the daughter of a Baptist clergyman, and one of her sisters was the wife of Moses Smith, who had been since 1832 an ardent Mormon.* Smith was a man of sterling character and much natural ability, a pioneer of the best type. In 1835 he migrated to Racine County, Wisconsin, in company with Benjamin C. Perce, his brother-in-law, who was, of course, the brother of Mrs. Strang. In the autumn of the same year the two men explored the western end of the county bordering on Fox River. Smith marked his claim on the present site of Burlington, while Perce located a claim two miles farther west, the site of the future sacred city of Voree. Friends and relatives soon followed these first-comers to the new location, and due to Smith's proselyting zeal and qualities of leadership the new community became a considerable local center of Mormonism.

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* *Centennial History of Chautauqua County* (Jamestown, 1904), I, 176–177.

† See Andrew W. Young, *History of Chautauqua County, New York* (Buffalo, 1875), p. 427 for the list of charter members. Strang's father, Clement Strang, was the latest survivor of the group.

Although Strang had acquired through his marriage in 1836 an intimate connection with members of the Mormon faith, we have no evidence to indicate that he himself paid any serious attention to the new teaching while he remained a resident of Chautauqua County. In the summer of 1843, however, he followed the westward path of his wife's relatives to Burlington, Wisconsin, where he soon fell under the influence of Mormonism. Moses Smith had removed to Illinois before this time, but his brother, Aaron, was living at Burlington and, like Moses, was an ardent Mormon. With Aaron Smith, Strang journeyed to Nauvoo in February, 1844. Whether he came to scoff and remained to pray remains unrecorded. At any rate, under the personal instruction of Joseph and Hyrum Smith and Sidney Rigdon, at this time the three highest dignitaries of Mormonism, the erstwhile "cool philosopher" and ardent infidel quickly became a convert to the faith. A born orator, possessed of a brilliant if erratic mind, and equipped with a remarkable fund of information, the neophyte evidently made a strong impression upon the Mormon leaders. He was baptized by the Prophet himself and sealed with the keys of the Melchisedic priesthood, and later was ordained an elder.*

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* A long and appreciative account of Moses Smith's career accompanies his obituary notice in the Voree *Herald*, June 24, 1849.

At this time the Saints were discussing anew their need of a suitable country where they might settle and be free from gentile molestation. Joseph Smith was a man of very defective education, but he knew how to levy upon the knowledge possessed by others. With Strang, who was "greatly learned in geography," he discussed a project for exploring the far West to learn what facilities it offered for Mormon settlement. Of more immediate import for our story, Strang advised that a settlement of Saints be made at once on White River near Burlington, advancing plausible economic reasons in support of the proposal. Accordingly he was enjoined by the church leaders to return home and prepare a more careful report to the Prophet concerning the desirability of developing a Mormon center of influence on the spot he had pointed out. This was done, and on May 24 Strang mailed his report to Smith at Nauvoo, setting forth minutely the advantages which would accrue to the Mormons from building a town in southeastern Wisconsin, and especially recommending the site on White River two miles west of Burlington, where Benjamin Perce had located in 1835.

The response to this letter was sufficiently startling. At Nauvoo, despite the outward appearance of prosperity, due to a combination of internal dissension and gentile persecution the *régime* of Joseph Smith was tottering to its fall. It ended tragically on June 27, 1844, with the murder of the Prophet and his brother Hyrum by a gentile mob in Carthage jail. At the identical moment the Prophet was thus slain in Illinois, the angel of God appeared to Strang in Wisconsin, "accompanied by a numerous heavenly train," and anointing his head with oil, divinely ordained him to the rulership of the Saints on Earth.*

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* The facts concerning Strang's conversion have been drawn from the Chronicles of Voree, pp. 7 ff. This is one of the official record books (sacred in the eyes of the faithful) of the church which Strang established. Until half a dozen years ago it was in the possession of Wingfield Watson of Burlington. The present writer caused a photostatic reproduction to be made of it, and this reproduction is preserved in the Wisconsin Historical Library, in Madison.

Meanwhile, on June 18, nine days before this angelic annunciation, Smith at Nauvoo had written a letter to Strang which was received by the latter at Burlington on July 9.† On the receipt of Strang's report, it stated, the Prophet had inclined to the opinion that Strang was under the influence of an evil spirit. But God had appeared to him on the hill of the temple, clothed with light as with a garment; moon and stars went out, the earth dissolved in space, and Smith was caught up on wings of cherubim to strains of heavenly music. To him was revealed his approaching martyrdom, and the appointment of Strang as his successor in the prophetic office. On the prairie by White River, in the counties of Racine and Walworth, he should establish a new gathering place for the sorely beset Saints; here a temple should be built and many mighty works of God be manifested; the people would have rest and peace and wax fat and pleasant in the presence of their enemies; and the place should be called Voree, which, being interpreted, means "garden of peace."

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* The authority for the angelic visitation is, of course, Strang himself. His narrative of the event was first printed in *The Diamond,* a religious disquisition published at Voree in pamphlet form in 1848. It was subsequently reprinted in Strang's *The Prophetic Controversy* (St. James, 1854), pp. 13–14.

† Chronicles of Voree, pp. 1 ff. Printed also in *The Diamond.* The Mormon factions opposed to the Strangite group angrily maintained that this letter was a forgery. See, e.g., statements of Crandell Dunn and John Taylor in the Liverpool (Eng.) *Millennial Star,* October 15, 1846. The present writer, early in the course of this study formed the opinion that if Smith's letter were still in existence an examination of it would suffice to determine the question of its authenticity. After several years of vain groping it was found and is now in the writer's possession. Perusal of it disclosed, however, that the body of the letter had been written by some clerk or other person and only the signature was (or purported to be) in Smith's hand. To detect a forged signature alone is obviously less easy than to detect an entire forged letter, and a closer familiarity with Smith's handwriting than the writer can claim would be requisite to determine the issue in question.

Into the realm of the miraculous the plain historian may not enter. It calls for no comment, therefore, that while this letter was being written James J. Strang at distant Voree was enjoying his first vision.* In spirit he was carried to the top of the hill on the west border of Racine, with Gardner's Prairie to the north and the White River marshes to the south. Before him was spread out a city built of stone, with gardens and streets, shops and people. The vision changed, and the people with lively pace and smiling countenance thronged the streets. Again the vision changed, and all were assembled in a vast hall, and James J. Strang, surrounded by wise men and counselors and priests and eloquent orators arose and taught the people; and the spirit of prophecy witnessed to him that these things should come to pass.

Such was the divine appointment and such the dream that directed Strang's further pathway in life. In contrast with the splendor of these heavenly visions, the immediate pathway which he must tread was thorny enough. The assassination of Joseph Smith plunged the Church into a state of confusion from which even yet it has not recovered. The leadership of a people numbering scores of thousands was a matter of no slight importance, and over the succession to Joseph developed a permanent schism in the ranks of Mormonism. The immediate situation at Nauvoo was in the hands of the twelve apostles, and under the able leadership of Brigham Young they grasped and held the power which had fallen from the hands of Smith. Two companion rivals contested this dominance with Young and the Twelve. Sidney Rigdon, one of the founders of Mormonism, and sole surviving member of the First Presidency, was one of these, but his opposition was soon disposed of. Less spectacular, perhaps, than Rigdon's, but far more persistent and menacing to the designs of Young and his associates, were the claims put forward by Strang.

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* Chronicles of Voree, pp. 9–10; printed in the Voree *Herald*, August, 1846.

CHAPTER II

The Struggle for the Succession

WHEN a monarch departs the earthly stage leaving behind him a well-ordered government with a definite scheme of succession, the transition of rulers need occasion no trouble or disorder. But when, on the contrary, the governmental organization is rudimentary and no recognized scheme of succession exists, ambitious rivals are certain to contend for the scepter, with consequent schisms and turmoil. Joseph Smith was the creator of Mormonism, yet although he was supposed to enjoy familiar and frequent intercourse with the Omnipotent, his many inspired pronouncements afforded the thousands of followers, who had staked their all in this world and in the world to come upon his teachings, no clear indication concerning the rightful succession to the authority he had resigned. There ensued for Mormonism, therefore, as night succeeds the day, a prolonged period of internecine strife and tumult. Faction contended with faction and to a ribald gentile world was presented the spectacle of the foremost leaders among the Saints denouncing one another in language charged with venom no less bitter than they had hitherto employed toward their gentile persecutors. The fair fabric of the Church was rent in tatters; today, despite the passage of three-quarters of a century of time, the divisions then engendered still endure, with no present prospect that the ancient unity will ever be restored.

Only in the light of the considerations here briefly suggested can the reader prepare himself to understand the violence of language and the bitterness of feeling which pervades the remainder of our narrative. For Strang, the initial steps in the assumption of the prophetic calling afforded a foretaste of the turmoil which was henceforth to beset his pathway to the end of life. On July 26, 1844, accompanied by Aaron Smith, he set out from Burlington on his first mission to acquaint the Saints abroad with his ministry and to invite their allegiance and support. At Florence, Michigan, a conference of elders was held to whom Strang stated his case. According to the Strangite record,* it was agreed that Moses Smith and another elder should proceed to carry the revelation to Nauvoo; meanwhile, those elders who accepted Strang's appointment were to preach it on their own responsibility, while those who doubted were to maintain silence. Two of them, however, Elders Dunn and Green, who were the presiding high priests for Michigan, attempted to prevent Strang and Smith from proceeding farther on their mission. An uproar followed, which Strang ended by informing his opponents they could not command him "whom God had placed at their head," and withdrawing from the premises.

Quite different was Dunn's story of this affair.† He affirmed that, detecting flaws in Strang's letter of appointment, he subjected him to a process of cross-questioning which the aspiring Prophet was unable to meet. Finding he had no license to preach, and that his claims were without merit, Dunn proceeded to cut him off from the Church and to report this action to the authorities at Nauvoo, where it was duly published.‡

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* Chronicles of Voree, pp. 13 ff.

† Printed in the Liverpool *Millennial Star*, October 15, 1846.

‡ Dunn represents that when he exposed the fraud in connection with Strang's letter of appointment the latter's "head dropped as if he had been knocked down." This, if true, affords the only instance we have found in Strang's entire career where he was overcome in the field of argument.

Strang and Aaron Smith continued their eastward mission as far as Sandusky, while Moses Smith wended his way in the opposite direction to Nauvoo. The Prophet was hopeful of meeting the twelve apostles of the Church who were returning to Nauvoo after the death of Smith.* In this he failed, and after a spell of illness returned by boat to Wisconsin, landing at Southport† on September 4.

Thus far the knowledge of Strang's doings had been concealed from the people around Voree, "lest they should be induced to ask unreasonable prices for their lands."‡ On January 5, 1845, however, the first church meeting was held at the house of Aaron Smith at Voree, and elders were appointed, who from this time began to preach throughout the surrounding region the appointment of Strang and the gathering at Voree. Not until autumn, however, did the advocates of the new Prophet attract any particular public notice. In a second divine revelation, given out by Strang in January, 1845, with a view to encouraging his followers in their ministry, it was promised that if they would faithfully serve God He would give to Strang "the plates of the ancient records" which should be a witness between God and those who served Him.§

On September 1, 1845, accordingly, Strang experienced his second angelic visitation, the divine messenger coming this time to reveal to him the ancient records.‖ Twelve days later, Strang called together four of his followers and told them what he had thus learned. Under his direction they proceeded to the "hill in the east of Walworth, against White River in Voree," and there, digging under the roots of an oak tree a foot in diameter, found certain metallic plates, carefully cased up and covered with "an alphabetical and pictorial record."* Such a discovery naturally roused great interest in the surrounding region. Strang records that several thousand people came to examine the ground, and the whole country "was filled with the fame of the occurrence." Into our story at this point flits for a single pleasant moment a man whom the modern world of business should ever hold in grateful memory. C. Latham Sholes, inventor of the typewriter, whose cheerful click encircles the globe, was then the editor of a country paper in the nearby town of Southport. The fame of the supernatural discovery led him to pay a visit to Voree to investigate the matter.

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* At the time of Smith's murder most of the church leaders were absent from Nauvoo, prosecuting his campaign for the presidency. On receiving news of his death they hastened to make their several ways homeward to the capital city.

† The modern city of Kenosha.

‡ Chronicles of Voree, p. 14.

§ Revelation of June 17, 1845, in Chronicles of Voree.

‖ The revelation is in the Chronicles of Voree, pp. 21 ff.; it has been reprinted by Wingfield Watson in a pamphlet collection of *Revelations of James J. Strang*, pp. 5–6.

> The prophet appears to us [runs his editorial report of his investigation] a very intelligent man, devoid of anything like enthusiasm; and, so far as we could judge, honest and earnest in all he said. The men who subscribe the statement [concerning the finding of the plates] are said to be among the most honest and intelligent in the neighborhood; and, taking it all together, it is something to stagger ordinary credulity.
>
> The popular opinion will doubtless call it a humbug. So should we from the natural impulse of our mind. But when the testimony appears in opposition to such impulse, we are content—to have no opinion about it.

The finding of the Voree plates may well be viewed as the touchstone of Strang's prophetic career. That the plates were found and dug up under his direction is as well established as any fact can be by human testimony. It is quite conceivable that Strang's angelic visitations may have had only a subjective existence in the brain of the man who reported them. But the metallic plates possessed a very material objective reality; and we can hardly escape the conclusion either that Strang knowingly fabricated and "planted" them for the purpose of duping his credulous followers, or that they were what they purport to have been, ancient records divinely preserved, in the discovery and translation of which Strang was divinely guided. If the former alternative be accepted, it follows that Strang's entire prophetic career was a false and impudent imposture; if the latter be the true one, we are confronted by the sad fact that of all the people now on earth only a few score at the most have comprehended it.

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* Chronicles of Voree, pp. 25 ff.; Strang, *Prophetic Controversy*, pp. 35–36; Watson, *Revelations of James J. Strang*, pp. 6–8. The four "witnesses" who dug up the plates were Aaron Smith, Jirah B. Wheelan, James M. Van Nostrand, and Edward Whitcomb. Like the witnesses to Joseph Smith's plates, most of these later apostatized and repudiated Strang.

On the day after the plates were dug up (September 14) the faithful assembled at the house of Aaron Smith to inspect them and to listen to an account by Strang and the four witnesses of the manner in which they had been obtained.* A week later they again assembled, together with an "immense concourse" of outsiders. The story of finding the plates by divine direction was repeated, and in addition Strang read the translation which he had made by the aid of Urim and Thummim three days before.† Whatever this translation may have signified to the faithful, to the unbeliever it presents a strange jumble of unintelligible nonsense.‡ The inscription purports to be the record of "Rajah

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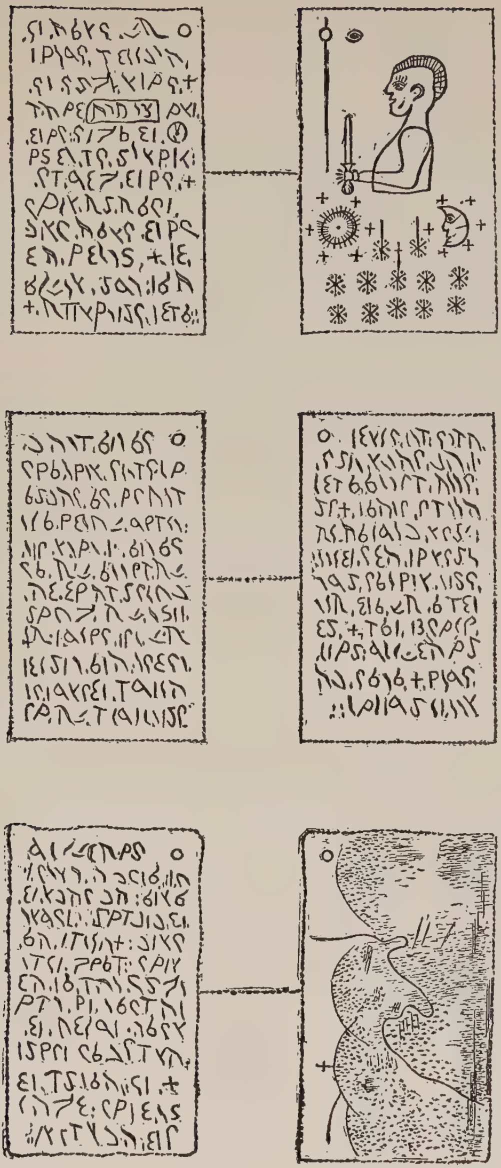
* Chronicles of Voree, p. 29.

†Urim and Thummim were two transparent stones set in the rims of a bow which an angel had provided for Joseph Smith to use in translating the Book of Mormon. After its translation they were restored to the angelic custody by Smith. Believers in Strang's claim to the prophetic succession would, of course, regard his possession of Urim and Thummim as an additional evidence of his divine calling.

‡ The translation is recorded in the Chronicles of Voree, pp. 30–31. It is printed in Watson, *Revelations of James J. Strang*, pp. 6–7, and in Legler, *A Moses of the Mormons*, p. 171.



THE VOREE PLATES

Reproduced from a pamphlet issued by Wingfield Watson. The plates have long since been lost.

Manchore of Vorito." With this single appearance, "Rajah Manchore" vanishes from the stage of human history. But the concluding sentences of his "record" possess a significance which even the gentile mind can grasp. "The forerunner men shall kill, but a mighty prophet there shall dwell. I will be his strength, and he shall bring forth thy record. Record my words and bury it in the hill of Promise." The "forerunner" was, of course, Joseph Smith, and the "mighty prophet," James J. Strang; and the clear intent of these statements was to evidence to the world that Strang had been appointed by God from ancient times to be his vicegerent on earth.

The organization of the Church, which had remained in abeyance for more than a year after the revelation of Strang's divine appointment, now proceeded apace. Stephen Bartholf was sent on a mission to Nauvoo to convey thither the news of the discovery of the ancient plates.* In two weeks he returned with an inquiring elder of the Church at Nauvoo, and in a conference of the faithful held at Bartholf's home it was unanimously agreed to publish to all the Saints the testimonies of God's work in the upbuilding of Voree, and the title of Strang to the First Presidency of the Church.

The obvious import of this resolution was a declaration of war upon the twelve apostles at Nauvoo, who under the masterful guidance of Brigham Young had seized control of the Church after the murder of Smith in 1844. The charge of the publication was intrusted to Prophet Strang, and he proceeded to bring out, in January, 1846, the first issue of the Voree *Herald*, which was to be henceforth the official organ of the Strangite movement. The *Herald* contained, aside from "James the Prophet's" first pastoral letter to the elders of the Church, the testimony of the four witnesses besides other documents and arguments concerning Strang's divine calling.* Instead of at once confronting the Twelve at Nauvoo with this evidence, however, Strang proceeded to develop a rear attack upon their entrenchments. The Twelve were at this time bending every energy to the task of removing the faithful to the far West, there to set up in the wilderness a theocratic nation. Captains of hundreds were appointed, under whose leadership not only the Saints of Nauvoo but those abroad who could be persuaded to undertake the migration, were being organized. Scattered over northern Illinois were hundreds of Mormons, many of whom were preparing to join in the great journey toward the setting sun. Upon these trustful people the zealots from Voree descended with the disconcerting information that the leadership of the Twelve was a usurpation and their projected westward migration a device of the devil. With words of burning eloquence Strang pleaded with the misguided Saints; with masterly argument he convinced them.

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* Chronicles of Voree, pp. 31 ff.

> Let not my call to you be vain. The destroyer has gone forth among you and has prevailed. You are preparing to resign country and houses and lands to him. Many of you are about to leave the haunts of civilization and of men to go into an unexplored wilderness among savages, and in trackless deserts to seek a home in the

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* No copy of this first issue of the *Herald* seems now to be in existence; it apparently contained the greater portion (pp. 1–12) of what Strang later reprinted as *The Diamond: Being the Law of Prophetic Succession and a Defense of the Calling of James J. Strang as Successor to Joseph Smith* . . . See Chronicles of Voree, p. 49. A letter of Reuben Miller to Strang from Nauvoo, February 15, 1846 (the date on the letter is 1845, but the contents disclose that the actual date was 1846), states that five thousand copies of the paper had been struck off at Nauvoo for local use. The letter is preserved among the personal papers of James J. Strang, now in the present writer's possession (cited henceforth as the Strang MSS).

> wilds where the footprint of the white man is not found. The voice of God has not called you to this. His promise has not gone before to prepare a habitation for you. The hearts of the Lamanites* are not turned unto you, and they will not regard you. When the herd comes the savages shall pursue. The cloud which surrounds by day shall bewilder, and the pillar of fire by night shall consume and reveal you to the destroyer, and the men in whom you trusted when you rejected the promises of God shall leave you early and not be found of you in your greatest need.
>
> Let the oppressed flee for safety unto Voree, and let the gathering of the people be there. Let the evil who have gone to the holy city be rejected, and given to the law. Let the Twelve go out and preach the gospel to the nations according to the command of God, instead of staying at home as a prominent mark to bring cruel enemies on their brethren. Let the filth of Zion be cleansed and her garments of peace put on. Let neither gun nor sword be lifted in defiance, nor rest be taken upon arm of flesh, and the city of our God shall be saved and the Temple of his holiness be unpolluted by the hand of the gentile.

At St. Charles, Illinois, on January 6, Strang encountered Reuben Miller, one of the captains appointed by the Twelve to organize a company of one hundred at Ottawa for the western journey. A set debate between Strang and Miller was arranged in the presence of some sixty of the Saints, but after Strang had talked four hours "in his rapid manner" Miller confessed himself unable to answer the arguments that had been advanced.† Therewith the hopes of the Twelve for at least one of the migrating companies went glimmering. The result of a series of such meetings over northern Illinois was that many who had been loyal adherents of the Twelve subscribed to Strang's teachings, while others, bewildered by the conflicting claims of Strang and the Twelve, adopted a questioning state of mind and a readiness to demand of the latter that they give proof of

* The Indians.

† Chronicles of Voree, pp. 52 ff.

their authority to lead the Church. High Priest Reuben Miller, who had come to Ottawa to organize a company and lead it into the wilderness, returned instead to Nauvoo bearing a warning from Strang to the Twelve that they desist from further iniquitous procedure and present themselves at Voree before April 7 to undergo trial upon the charges that would be preferred against them.*

This was carrying the war into Africa with a vengeance. Among the men to whom this ukase was delivered† by a man who was himself but a neophyte in the Church were several of the ablest leaders Mormonism has ever produced. They were not likely to be greatly awed by the summons, but they could not fail to be concerned over the evident impression Strang's teachings were producing upon many of their followers.‡ The depth of this concern is evidenced by the bitterness of their language and the violence of their measures toward Strang. On January 24, 1846, the Twelve, over the signature of Brigham Young as president of the Church, and Orson Hyde as clerk, addressed a lengthy letter of admonition and warning to the branches of the Church in the vicinity of Ottawa. In it Strang was described as "an excommunicated member of the church." His "pretended" revelations and letter from Joseph Smith were characterized as "a base and wicked forgery," and their author "a wicked liar."

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* Chronicles of Voree, pp. 54–56. The letter of Reuben Miller to Strang, February 15, 1846 (cited *supra*, p. 20), discloses that Strang already had an active following in Nauvoo, and appeals to him for advice and direction as to what attitude the Saints shall assume with respect to the migration to the far West which was just being launched by the Twelve.

† They were Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, Orson Hyde, John E. Page, George A. Smith, John Taylor, William Woodruff, Lyman Wight, and Willard Richards. Page was shortly won over by Strang, while Lyman Wight embarked upon a church movement of his own.

‡ According to the Chronicles of Voree, three hundred converts were won to Strang during the January mission into Illinois.

> Is it not surprisingly strange [the warning continued], that Joseph Smith should appoint a man to succeed him in the presidency of the church some seven or ten days before his death, and yet not tell it to the High Council, nor to any of the authorities of the church . . . If Mr. Strang had received his appointment from Joseph, why did he not come here upon the death of Joseph and take charge of the church, and lead them to Voree? Because his own guilty heart would not let him come near the Furnace of trial . . . Is it not surprisingly strange that when Sidney Rigdon was tried and cut off from the church for his lying visions and revelations to secure the presidency, no one arose to declare that Joseph Smith had written a letter of appointment to J. J. Strang [MS torn: appointing him to the vacant place?] ? No! Because he [MS torn: never wrote such a letter?]
>
> But Rigdon had his John C. Bennett to manufacture revelations for him purporting to come from Joseph Smith appointing him [Rigdon] to be his [Joseph's] successor: so also, Strang has unquestionably had his accomplice in fixing up his letter of appointment. The two breathe the same spirit, for by one spirit were they both indited. And I say unto you, beloved brethren, that Joseph Smith never wrote or caused to be written Strang's letter of appointment. It is a lie—a forgery—a snare. And let this testimony be had in remembrance before God, and let it stand against him and you if you shall persist in following him. Our garments are clear of your blood. [After much further argument designed to establish the authority of the Twelve to lead the church, the warning concludes]: Now Brethren, if you shall think propper to listen to the falsehoods of Mr. Strang after this letter is laid before you, Bro. Miller is instructed to cut you off from the church. We hope you will see your error and flee from it, and save yourselves from the snare of deception and the Devil.*

Despite this pious hope and urgent admonition, Orson Hyde of the Twelve, to insure the thwarting of Strang's designs upon the faithful, shortly embarked upon the thorny pathway of divine revelation. Even Joseph Smith's power

* Address (MS) of Brigham Young, on behalf of the Twelve, "To the branches of the church in the neighborhood of Ottawa," January 24, 1846, preserved in Strang MSS.

of announcing revelations was put under censorship after the establishment of Nauvoo, and Brigham Young, despite much urging, steadily refused throughout his long career as ruler of the Saints to indulge in revelations.* Hyde's revelation, dated March 14, 1846, was put forth with affected modesty for the benefit of the Church of Latter Day Saints, every member of which was "left to judge through whom it was given and from what source it came."

Notwithstanding this humble introduction, the Lord, through his mouthpiece, Orson Hyde, left no room for doubt concerning the character of Strang's pretensions:

> Evil men ambitious of power, must needs arise among you, and they shall be led by their own self-will and not by me . . . Behold James J. Strang hath cursed my people by his own spirit and not by mine. Never, at any time have I appointed that wicked man to lead my people, neither by my own voice, nor by the voice of my servant Joseph Smith, neither by the voice of mine angel: but he hath sought to deceive and Satan helpeth him: but before of old was he one that was ordained to gather the tares of the field, and mine angels have chosen him to do it because he was a wicked man, even as Judas was chosen to betray his Lord. But his spirit and ambition shall soon fail him, and then shall he be called to judgment and receive that portion which is his mete. And his treacherous followers who have forsaken the counsel of their brethren and turned from the covenants of their God, and have cast aside the tenderest ties, must drink from a bitter cup.†

"Strangism is dead here," wrote Hyde in a note transmitting a copy of his revelation to one of the Ottawa Saints, "and some who were carried away with it for a little time have returned to their church and confessed their errors and sins."* The tactics of the Twelve by which it was killed (it will shortly appear that this announcement was much too optimistic) are not without interest. Hard upon Strang's summons to the Twelve to appear before him for trial, came Moses Smith to Nauvoo, intent upon advocating his leader's cause in the Temple itself. Prevented by the Mormon leaders from entering the sacred edifice, he mounted a large stone and conducted an open-air meeting, until driven into flight by a Brighamite mob.† Such measures on the part of the Twelve only served to increase the public interest in Smith's message. Changing their course, therefore, they gave him a hearing in the Temple. At the conclusion of his address their ablest speakers were put forward to refute and confound him; after which, denying him an opportunity to reply, a vote was carried, amidst the "clamor and screaming" of the assembled congregation, cutting him off from the Church and forbidding anyone to hear him or any other advocate of Strang, or even to read the Voree *Herald*.

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* For evidence, see William A. Linn, *The Story of the Mormons . . . to 1901* (New York, 1902), pp. 114, 266, 329, 435.

† A printed copy of the revelation, sent by Hyde to "Brother Sanger" of Ottawa, for circulation among the Norwegian Saints, is preserved among the Strang MSS.

Notwithstanding, Smith and those who had come with him continued for some time to advocate the cause of Strang in Nauvoo and the country round about, and they succeeded in turning many from the "delusions of Brighamism." Included in the number were some of the most important officials of the Church at Nauvoo. From the ranks of the Twelve came John E. Page, while William Smith, brother of the martyred Joseph and "chief patriarch" of the Church, also subscribed to the claims of Prophet Strang. Of more solid worth than either of these was William E. Marks, president of the stake of Nauvoo. William Smith was at best a poor creature, who before long was to desert Strang as he was now deserting the Twelve. But it was a distinct triumph for Strang's cause that along with William the whole Smith family (with the single exception of Joseph's widow), including venerable Lucy Smith, mother of the founder of Mormonism, adhered to Strang's cause and publicly certified their belief in his appointment at the hands of Joseph.*

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* *Ibid.*

† See account of Smith's life in Voree *Herald*, June 14, 1849; Chronicles of Voree, pp. 58–60.

At the beginning of April, 1846, a general church conference was held at Voree, and here the work of organizing the Strangite Church was carried to completion.† Of the Twelve, John E. Page, having made his peace with Strang, was recognized as a member in good standing of the Strangite council of twelve, and the case of Wilford Woodruff was laid over because of his absence on mission to England. The nine contumacious apostles (there was one vacancy in the ranks of the Twelve), having ignored Strang's summons, were put to trial with all due solemnity, and in their absence were cut off from the Church, their priesthood taken away, and themselves "delivered over to the buffetings of Satan." It is a sad commentary on Mormonism that the worst accusations ever leveled at its adherents by an angry and frequently unjust gentile world can be matched line for line with similar accusations made by the Saints themselves in the course of their interminable factional and personal controversies. The Saints have long complained, and with justice, that the world is ever ready to believe all manner of evil against them; but they seem seldom to have realized that their own testimony against one another affords color to the worst of gentile accusations. In the trial of the nine apostles, they were formally charged, among other things, with "abolishing the liberty of speech and the press by command and violence"; "systematically plundering the church of its property for the use of themselves and their favorites"; "teaching that polygamy, fornication, adultery, and concubinage are lawful and commendable"; "that lying, to build up the church of God, is justifiable, and that secret wickedness will not be brought into judgment, and carrying out these principles in constant practice." And all these charges were formally sustained by the testimony of Mormon witnesses, and unanimously voted proved by the church council which sat as a jury.

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* See certificate signed by members of the Smith family, printed in Voree *Herald*, July, 1846. A repudiation of this certificate by Catherine Salisbury, one of the signers, is printed in the Lamoni (Iowa) *Saints' Herald*, XLVI (March 26, 1899), 261.

† Conference minutes in Chronicles of Voree, pp. 72 ff.

The detailed testimony* by which these dreadful accusations were sustained sheds interesting light upon the abnormal state of mind and of morals which prevailed among the leaders of the Church at this time—the more convincing because it was largely given by men who had themselves participated in the activities described.

In the matter of church doctrine, Jehiel Savage related that Orson Hyde had interrupted a religious discussion with the assertion that Mormons had nothing to do with the Book of Doctrines and Covenants; they were "not to be governed any more by the Letter but by the Spirit." John E. Page, but recently a fellow member of the Twelve with Hyde, affirmed that the latter, after teaching a confessedly false interpretation of scripture, justified it as policy. Savage added that in a like case Brigham Young had said, "I don't know and don't care whether it is correct or not, so good grows out of it." Another witness quoted Brigham as saying he "would not give a straw" for the Book of Covenants, and still another, that it was no sin to do anything, even to kill a man, to save a brother who was in danger; as many women as would cling to his garments he would save, "do what they might."

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* For it see notes (undated and unsigned) on the charges against the Twelve preserved among the Strang MSS. Strang and William Smith united in publicly charging that John P. Green, city marshal of Nauvoo, was put out of the way because he had publicly stated that Joseph Smith had written the letter of appointment to Strang. See Voree *Herald*, July and August, 1846. On the same matter Warren Post, after 1850 one of the twelve apostles, and Strangite church historian, wrote as follows ("Personal History," MS in library of Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints at Lamoni): "It is generally believed that Brigham's administration commenced by the shedding of innocent blood; and by the shedding of blood, and the suffering of the innocent his way can be traced down to the present time.

"John P. Green, one of the witnesses to the letter containing James' appointment, was mysteriously missing about the time that the Twelve set themselves up in Nauvoo.

"Perhaps numerous ones have disappeared in the same way. There was a gang of thieves and robbers scattered through that portion of country adjacent to Nauvoo; and several of them were known as Mormons, and were in favor with Brigham."

Such teaching in the realm of church doctrine naturally prepared the minds of the faithful for corresponding standards of conduct. As to this, the testimony showed that the Twelve had hesitated at no measure, however extreme, to enforce their will at Nauvoo. The police, said T. S. Edwards, numbered two or three hundred members. They were organized as deacons with a bishop at their head, and Brigham had charged the bishops to see that the deacons did their duty. The purpose of this organization of the deacons James M. Adams explained to be "to consecrate property" for the benefit of the Church. By way of illustration he related that an apostate had a large fat hog. Adams and another "brother" butchered the hog and divided it. In like manner they appropriated a heifer and a steer, sending both hides and most of the beef to the Temple. Further details of extensive stealing of oxen and other property were given, and the witness affirmed that it was the duty of the deacons, if any apostates or enemies lived near by, "to get them into their homes and call in help and put them out of the way."

This general accusation of the employment of violence by the church leaders in the prosecution of their purposes was supported by ample and picturesque testimony. The police, said C. B. Thompson, were publicly under the entire control of the Twelve, and the moment the Twelve became dissatisfied with anyone he was put out. There was an institution, testified several witnesses, known as "Aunt Peggy." "Aunt Peggy" was a very severe woman, and it was common to say by way of threat "we will deliver you over to Aunt Peggy." Brigham proposed to deliver over to her Doctor Charles, "a very reputable man of whom no evil could be said." However, he was "whittled" instead, and although he appealed to the Twelve for protection against the whittlers, the protection was denied by Brigham. Whenever any opposition was manifested toward the authority of the Twelve, Young and all the others would throw out "hints and innuendoes" that violent measures would be employed against the trouble makers. "They had better look out," Young and Kimball were in the habit of saying, "I'll send Aunt Peggy after them." When anyone became disaffected "Aunt Peggy was there," and mouths were sealed up. Kimball denounced one Lambert Lyman, announced that his priesthood should be taken from him, and called on the police "to put on the whole armour and take care of him"; "he has not been seen since," the witness significantly concludes.

The "whittling" and "whistling" societies were evidently close kin to Aunt Peggy. They were "set going" by the high council of the Twelve. At a meeting of the high priests' quorum Kimball said if anyone present should reveal anything that was said he would lose his head, "even if he [Kimball] had to take it off himself." It was then proposed that a man named Madison be put out of the way by some means, and one of those on the stand proposed that C. C.

Rich "grease and swallow" him. A motion to this effect was made, but for some reason it was dropped without a vote. A week later the witness saw Madison going out of town "whittled by about twenty men with long bowie knives." They were kicking him down, rolling him in the mud, etc., for three-quarters of a mile.

To gentile readers the rite of "greasing and swallowing" also seems to call for explanation. It meant "tying one end of the rope to one and the other to a stone and sinking it in the river." The loyalty to the Twelve of C. C. Rich, who had been nominated to perform the rite on Madison, was attested by his election in December, 1847, to membership in the Twelve on the occasion when Young formally assumed the First Presidency. Analogous to the custom of "greasing and swallowing" was the doctrine, taught by mere innuendo of "making a sacrifice of stinking meat to the gentiles and making catfish bait."

In the light of such testimony Strang's omission (with which the Twelve did not neglect to taunt him) to show his head at Nauvoo becomes easily understandable. In the effort to minimize any movement in his favor his spokesmen were "cut off from the church without opportunity for discussion or debate," and any attempt to consider or investigate his claims was sternly frowned upon. Orson Hyde moved that "if any man investigate Strangism or talk with them on the subject" he should be cut off, and without putting the motion to a vote the audience shouted "Amen!" Although Apostle Page had not heard the advice "to cut off the tails of the Strangites just behind the ears," he was well satisfied that there was much danger of the "Sundial" being accorded this treatment. Although no explanation of this term is recorded, it seems evident that it was employed as a euphemism for Prophet Strang.

CHAPTER III

Early Progress and Converts

THE success of the campaign for followers which Strang was waging depended upon his ability to convince the great body of the Saints that upon him, rather than upon the Twelve, the crown of the martyred Joseph had descended. With the Twelve in complete possession of the field at Nauvoo, and with such forceful leaders as Brigham Young, Orson Hyde, and Willard Richards among their number, the magnitude of this task is apparent. Yet one tremendous advantage rested with Strang in the combat for the headship of the orphaned flock. The Mormon Church owed its existence to a prophet and seer, who was presumed to be the mouthpiece of God to finite men; the entire church organization and faith was centered in the existence of a prophet in the flesh, and the Saints were accustomed to sing lustily, in their religious gatherings, the hymn beginning "A church without a Prophet Is not the church for me." Now Joseph was gone, and no one save Strang even pretended to have any divine commission to succeed him. The Twelve under Young's guidance boldly usurped the vacant headship, and defended the usurpation with such arguments as they were able to muster. But the illogic of this position was such that it could not escape the attention even of a zealot. Brigham Young refused to issue revelations at all, and Orson Hyde's sole essay in this direction was given out with a painful lack of self-assurance. Strang's taunt that the Brighamites had ceased to sing "A church without a Prophet," could not be answered, and the difficulty was finally solved (and at the same time all the prior arguments of the Twelve on the subject were repudiated) by the election of Young as President in December, 1847.

Our present concern is with the early months of 1846 when Strang's advocacy of his prophetic pretensions began for the first time to win any considerable hearing. Honest and simple-minded zealots aside, it was obvious that only those Saints would enrol under Strang's banner who were disgruntled, for one reason or another, with the ruling group at Nauvoo. Equally obvious is it that some of the conspicuous leaders must be won over if any progress was to be made with the more simple-minded Saints. Of disgruntled leaders there was no lack for during Joseph Smith's life there had been an almost constant succession of apostasies and excommunications, and under the ruthless rule of the Twelve in the months following Smith's death these processes had operated with accelerated speed.

The conversion of Reuben Miller, noted in the preceding chapter, proved a conquest of much significance to Strang. Miller seems to have been a somewhat simple soul, whose religious zeal was only equaled by the instability of his judgment. When he returned to Nauvoo following his unfortunate encounter with Strang at St. Charles, he proceeded at once to advocate vigorously the Prophet's claims to the leadership of the Church.* In particular he pressed them upon John E. Page of the Twelve, who, on February 1, indited a long letter to Strang wherein he recounted his valiant labors in the Mormon vineyard and the sad way in which they had been requited. To resort to modern terminology, Page's mental state presented a severe case of inferiority complex.

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* Strang MSS, letters of Miller to Strang, February 15, 1846, and of John E. Page to Strang, February 1, 1846.

> The last day of May next [he wrote] will be *ten* years since I first left my family, and my little all, to Preach the Everlasting gospel, from that time untill about one year since I have been incessantly employed in the vineyard, and have baptized more than one thousand souls. I began my work in extreem Poverty, and have suffered every privation immaginable, my family has been drag[g]ed through an Earthly hell in my absence, and I am as poor and destitute as when I first entered into the ministry. I have served this people in all diligence for ten years past, thinking most implicitly, that when ever I should return to any of the stakes of Zion to settle I should be reciprocated by the Church and its authorities and be sustained in my capacity equal with my bretheren of the same calling . . . I find my jet black hair faided to a silver gray, my lungs that was once like a lions is now hoarse and faltering, my bodyly system that once was like iron and steel for strength, is now more like a child's, soft and measureably infirm . . . Infirm, I am reduced to the capacity of a mere menial servant; and [to] the most severe hardship to keep body and spirit together . . . If ever my present bands of restraint are cut assunder, and I get out from under the influence and power of a partial despotism, I am fully resolved to let loos[e] my small artillery in a war of *words* against false principles . . .

Jealousy of his fellow members of the Twelve, and bitterness over the inadequacy of the writer's financial situation, is reflected in every line of the long communication, which readily serves to explain Page's early acceptance of Strang's claims, with the prospect held out thereby of a more comfortable status in the new organization than he had ever attained in the old.

Although this inroad upon the ranks of the Twelve was a distinct advantage to Strang at the time, in the long run the support of such a man as Page was of more than doubtful value. So, too, was the accession about the same time of John C. Bennett, a far more notable character than Page, to whose career we must now turn our attention.

Bennett was a native of Massachusetts by birth, a physician by profession, and an expert politician and demagogue by virtue of predilection and native endowment. Possessed of infinite mental resources, and endowed with great physical energy and superb self-assurance, he assumed a commanding rôle in whatever circle his lot was cast. He had been for a time President of the Medical Faculty, and Professor of the Principles and Practice of Midwifery and the Diseases of Women and Children at Willoughby University of Lake Erie, and he was now adorning a similar professorship at the Literary and Botanico-Medical College of Ohio in Cincinnati. The period of his active affiliation with Mormonism had been brief but exceedingly lurid. When the harassed Saints, fleeing before Missouri mobs and militia, had found asylum in Illinois, they had found it expedient to seek from the state authorities certain unusual governmental privileges and powers. The Springfield politicians, avid of Mormon votes, had proved extraordinarily complaisant. In particular Bennett, who was one of the state officials, saw in the situation an opportunity to promote his welfare by catering to the Mormon influence. It had been due chiefly to his political skill that the remarkable Nauvoo charter was lobbied through the legislature. Shortly thereafter Bennett himself became a Mormon, and almost at once became the recipient of an astonishing shower of official appointments and favors. He was made Mayor of Nauvoo and Major General of the Legion, head of the Nauvoo University, and acting member of the First Presidency of the Church. That he had possessed some tangible assurance of these developments at the time he was pushing the Nauvoo charter through the legislature seems highly probable. It is probable, too, that to him, rather than to Smith, was due the creation of the Legion and the University; he took no less pride in his military than in his medical attainments, and his interest in institutions of learning was as active as the Prophet's was quiescent. In short, Bennett was possessed of a fertile mind and an insatiable penchant for directing everything within the orbit of his observation, and to this propensity were ascribable alike his meteoric rise to fame and power, and his sudden downfall therefrom.

A year and a half sufficed for the "General-in-Chief" and "Prime Minister" of Mormonism to run his course. In the spring of 1842, over issues that have never been publicly explained or avowed, Bennett "withdrew" from all connection with the Saints. Extraordinary measures were resorted to to keep the quarrel from the public, and by especial direction of the Prophet to the General Clerk and Recorder of the Church, Bennett was given a statement signifying that he had "withdrawn" his membership from the Church with "the best of feelings subsisting between all parties,"* together with a certificate of good character by Sidney Rigdon.

These concessions availed nothing, however, to silence the tongue of the fallen Prime Minister concerning his erstwhile brethren. Upon leaving Nauvoo he at once began the serial publication of an *exposé* of Mormonism in the columns of the Sangamon *Journal*, which together with much additional material, came out as a book at Boston the same year, entitled *History of the Saints; or an Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism.* In this astonishing volume Bennett claimed he had never believed in Mormonism, but, realizing the viciousness of the movement, had joined it as a spy with the set purpose of gaining confidential information to be used later in exposing its iniquities to the world. That Bennett was himself a demagogue and a rascal is abundantly clear, and no particular faith need be placed in this explanation. Yet if even a tithe of the things set forth in his *exposé* of Mormonism as practiced at Nauvoo were true, it should have sufficed eternally to condemn the Church in the eyes of all upright men; if false, as adherents of the Church have uniformly claimed, it should forever have destroyed the standing of Bennett with those to whose faith he had turned traitor.

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* Strang MSS, letter of Bennett to Strang, March, 1846. The letter is undated, but is postmarked March 23.

On March 9, 1846, notwithstanding, Strang addressed to Bennett, now at Cincinnati, an overture to enrol under his banner. The correspondence that ensued between the two men should have sufficed to forewarn even one less omniscient than a prophet of God is presumed to be, of the trouble which would be certain to follow upon any alliance with such a man as Bennett. He manifested much eagerness to join forces with Strang, accompanied by a like insistence upon being accorded the same rank and confidence which Joseph had reposed in him at Nauvoo.* "Joshua, the son of Nun, was the 'General-in-Chief' to Moses," he wrote, "Joab to David—and my humble self to Joseph—and I hope to be so to *you*."

> You have inspired me with new life and vigor [runs another communication] and in prospect of resuming my old station, I feel as tho' I was a "tower of Strength" in the good cause. For about four years past "I have not been myself," for my spirits have been depressed and gloomy; but I have felt *like a young lion let loose* ever since I heard of your glorious movement. While *you* will be the *Moses* of the last days, *I* hope to be your *Joshua, my old position.* While you stand as the *Crowned Imperial Primate*, I will be as an *upright* line before the throne—your General-in-Chief.

Yet his zeal did not suffice to prevent him laying down the

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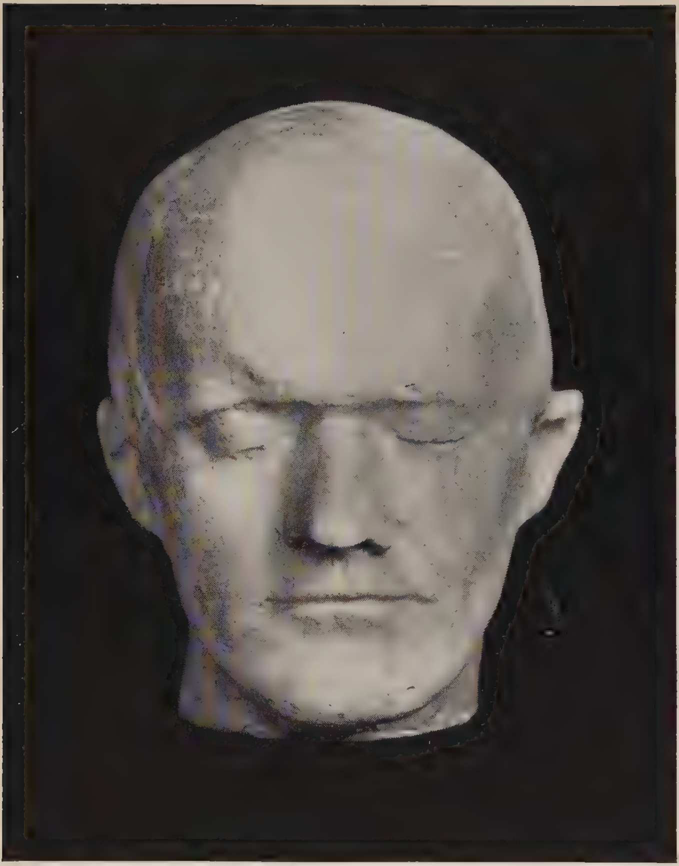
* Strang MSS, letters between Strang and Bennett, March–June, 1846.



LIFE MASK OF JAMES J. STRANG

Reproduced by courtesy of Roscoe B. Martin and
Charles M. Reed.

terms on which he would enlist under Strang's banner. He wanted no temporary "vascillating" appointment; "whatever place I am to occupy," he wrote, "I wish it to be by *revelation* and *commandment*."

The writer's former intimacy with Joseph Smith justifies the observation that he was not wholly ignorant of the processes by which revelations were evoked. However this may be, with his very first letter to Strang, Bennett began to manifest his qualifications for the prime ministry by instructing his chief what measures he should adopt and what appointments to office he should make.

> I advise you to obtain a charter for the "Voree University of Wisconsin," as soon as possible [he wrote on March 20]. Do not fail in this. It would be better to call it the "*University of Wisconsin*," (if you can get it passed by that name), to be located at Voree. This is very important.

In subsequent letters this project was further enlarged upon. Without awaiting the granting of the charter—without, indeed, affording Strang time to receive the initial proposal for a university—Bennett had selected, not to say elected, one of its professors, in the person of Doctor Fagen, who, it transpired later, was his partner in Cincinnati.

> He is a *splendid Surgeon* and Physician, and I wish you to receive him cordially and put him into business, so that he can acquire reputation and influence, preparatory to my coming on, so that he can take the Professorship of *Anatomy and Surgery*. Take him into the church and to your bosom, and treat him as you would me. I shall send him to you at Burlington. Retain him by all means, if you ever wish me with you.

Between giving directions concerning various problems, present or anticipated, the General-in-Chief found time to explain to Strang the occasion of his withdrawal from the

Church, which now, for the first time, after the lapse of almost ninety years, will be given public exposition. The difficulty with Joseph originated in a spirit of jealousy on the part of certain of the apostles (Brigham Young, Willard Richards, and John Taylor), who were fearful that Bennett would eclipse them in the affections of the people; so, "by a system of duplicity, fraud and corruption," they succeeded in souring the mind of Joseph Smith toward Bennett, and producing an open rupture. "This I have ever regretted," Bennett asserted, "but circumstances compelled me to fight, and sustain myself by recrimination." The truth of this explanation he called upon William Smith to attest. "He knew the circumstances, and, in the nobleness of his soul, he has always been my fast friend." "All I ever said against any member of the church," he wrote in a later letter, "was *in self-defense . . . I have loved the church for many years. I love it now.* I shall devote all my energies to revive it."

We have here a calm confession that Bennett's entire amazing crusade against the Church was insincere and dishonest. At the same time he did not refrain from the gravest charges against the three apostles whom he held responsible for his difficulties at Nauvoo.

> I was with the church in its most prosperous days [he affirmed], and *Joseph* and *I* were only severed by the corruptness of Willard Richards, Brigham Young and John Tailor. Their course was *damnable*—they *wished* the *death of Joseph that they might rule.* I *could* and *would at all times* have saved Joseph and the church, had I been applied to, and I should have been applied to but for *Willard Richards.*

That Strang should select, as he proceeded to do, a man with Bennett's record for his chief adviser and "Prime Minister," augured ill for the Garden of Peace at Voree.

But it was not alone the General-in-Chief whose accession was of ominous import to the future peace of Voree. Among the Saints whom Strang was seeking to win by holding out the prospect of official appointments were some of the most conspicuous trouble makers in the history of Mormonism—among others, William E. McLellin, William Smith, and George J. Adams. McLellin was characterized as "a splendid man," whom Bennett meant to bend every effort to attach to Strang. How inept this characterization was we will shortly have occasion to note. William Smith was a "noble soul," whom Bennett loved devotedly. With great practical shrewdness, he urged that he be invited to accept the patriarchal see at Voree; and that he be urged to bring with him "*his mother*, with the *mummies* and *papyrus*," together with the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum, as all these things would have an astonishing effect in congregating the people at Voree.

The allusion to the papyrus and the mummies recalls one of Joseph Smith's most amusing impostures. While he was still at Kirtland, a traveling showman came along, exhibiting, among other objects, two or three Egyptian mummies. Smith had them purchased for the Church, and when it was discovered that some papyri had been acquired along with the mummies, the Prophet proceeded to "translate" them. In due time he announced that one of the writings was by Abraham of Old Testament fame, and thereafter until Smith's death the mummies were treasured and exhibited (for a price) to curious visitors. Unfortunately for the credit of Smith's translation, however, he published along with it a picture of the document he had translated; thereby he enabled certain future scholars who really possessed some knowledge of Egyptology to expose the measure of Smith's pretended knowledge of the subject.

The character of George J. Adams, whom Bennett persuaded Strang to appoint as councilor,* was no less curious than that of Bennett himself. Of his early history, or the date of his conversion to Mormonism, we have found but little information. His letters reveal him as an uncultured, turbulent man, boastful, passionate, and crude. He was an actor by profession, and an orator of no mean ability. By the year 1841 he had become enough of a zealot to join with Orson Hyde who claimed to have a divine commission to carry the gospel of Mormonism to Jerusalem.† Hyde persevered in his mission, and in a long prayer on the Mount of Olives commended the Church to God and dedicated the land for the gathering of Israel. Adams, however, seems to have fallen by the wayside, for Hyde distinctly states that he performed this interesting act of devotion alone. In 1843 Hyde and Adams were again appointed upon a foreign mission, this time to Russia. This mission seems not to have materialized,‡ and we next hear of Adams addressing a sixteen-page letter to "his excellency John Tyler . . . touching the signs of the times and the Political Destiny of the world." Like Bennett, Adams was excommunicated by the Saints and he was living in Cincinnati when Strang appealed to Bennett to join his movement. Undoubtedly Bennett and Adams discussed the matter and the latter promptly wrote to the Prophet expressing a desire to receive his old "place, standing, and appointments" in the Church.§

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* The two associates of the Mormon prophet in the First Presidency are known as councilors. Bennett urged Strang to appoint Rigdon and Smith to this office, with himself as "supernumary" counselor; if Rigdon should decline the offer (as was anticipated) Bennett requested the place for himself. Strang's First Presidency, as thus constituted, was composed of himself, Bennett, and Adams.

† On Hyde's mission to Jerusalem, see Joseph and Heman Smith, *History of the Church of Latter Day Saints*, I, 647–648; II, 446–448 and 552–556.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 647. The Chronicles of Voree, pp. 80–81, gives the date of Adams' appointment to the Russian mission as June, 1844. If this is correct, the death of Smith would doubtless account for the failure to perform it.

§ Strang MSS, letter of Adams to Strang, March 27, 1846.

He explained that his excommunication had been the work of his enemies among the Twelvites, and warned Strang not to credit their "base phalshoods" concerning him. Their charges that he was addicted to drink and unduly fond of women were animated by jealousy over his success in drawing crowds "whereaver and wheneaver I lift up my voice."

A warier prophet than Strang might have hesitated long before admitting to his innermost councils such a man as Adams disclosed himself to be. Whether because of Bennett's influence or of the necessities of his situation, however, Strang accepted Adams' overture, and promised that he would be sustained in his office "according to the ordination of Joseph and Hyrum."* "As for those complaints that you say are made against you," he added, "I have only to say *now* that if you are guilty *you must do so no more.*" A new era had dawned upon the Church, and there was to be no "raking up of old scores." Equipped with this easily granted pardon, Adams entered upon his new rôle of high councilor in the Strangite organization; long after Bennett and McLellin and William Smith had apostatized and been damned with the ban of excommunication, Adams continued steadfast in his support of Strang, being chiefly engaged in proselyting work in the East. The frequent reports he sent back to Voree pictured his preaching as attended by vast and enthusiastic crowds; but reports of another sort were also being sent the Prophet, disclosing all too clearly that the "Boanerges of the Latter Day Saints" had not taken seriously Strang's injunction to refrain from drunkenness and fornication. The persistent retention of such a man in the highest position in the gift of the Church affords a fair measure of the moral standards to which the Saints in this period subscribed. The allegiance of Adams was from the beginning of more than doubtful benefit to the Church, and we shall see that his apostasy in the end was a cause of infinite trouble and danger to Strang.

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* *Ibid.*, letter of Strang to Adams, May 5, 1846.

With the preliminary work of reorganizing the Church accomplished, the Prophet proceeded to plan an invasion of the East and of Europe to wrest from the Twelve the sources of Mormon support in those regions. The first objective in this campaign was the stake at Kirtland, Ohio, the earliest seat of Mormonism. Thither Strang proceeded in early August, accompanied by a group of supporters and equipped with a letter of commendation addressed "to all the Saints scattered abroad," in the name of the "high priests, elders, presidents and general authorities" of the Church of Latter Day Saints. Under the spell and persistence of Strang's eloquence* the opposition of the Kirtland Saints completely melted. The stake was organized anew in the Strangite interest and the Prophet gained possession of the Mormon Temple. Here at Kirtland, too, a deputation was appointed to visit the British Isles to wrest from the Brighamite faction the allegiance of the English Saints. Included in its membership was Martin Harris, one of the three original witnesses of the Book of Mormon.† Missions to the Pacific Islands, to Russia, and to India were also approved by the Kirtland conference, and Strang was given full power to carry them into execution.

From Kirtland, accompanied by G. J. Adams and other associates, Strang proceeded eastward to Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, everywhere setting the local churches "in order," which meant, of course, winning them to an acceptance of Strang's prophetic calling and a repudiation of the Brighamite leadership. At Philadelphia Strang encountered

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* On one occasion he preached for eight hours in his "most rapid manner." Chronicles of Voree, p. 102.

† For the documents see Voree *Herald*, August, 1846.

Orson Hyde and John Taylor of the Twelve and promptly challenged them to a public debate on the respective validity of their claims and his own to the headship of the Church. The boast Strang was wont to make that he never refused an argument might almost be repeated by Mormons generally, for from its foundation the Church has thriven on disputations with unbelievers. In the present instance, however, Hyde and Taylor had no desire to close with Strang.

> After Lucifer was cut off and thrust down to hell [they replied], we have no knowledge that God ever condescended to investigate the subject or right of authority with him. Your cause has been disposed of by the rightful authorities of the Church. Being satisfied with our own power and calling, we have no disposition to ask from whence yours came.

Hyde and Taylor had gone on their present mission to the churches expressly to combat the claims of Strang;* the latter promptly turned this rencounter to advantage by publishing the correspondence in the Voree *Herald*, together with a further report of how Hyde had fled from G. J. Adams at Cincinnati, locking himself up in a stateroom of a river boat to avoid a meeting with that champion of Strang.* In Boston, too, Strang vainly sought an argument with Parley P. Pratt, another of the Brighamite Twelve. The "Archer of Paradise," as he was known among his associates, not only refused the argument, but according to Strang he was compelled, "between notes for borrowed money, writs for seducing wives, and warrants for adultery," to flee the city in advance of the police.†

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* Hyde's present disinclination to discuss the claims of Strang seem somewhat odd in view of the readiness he had displayed to discuss them in his reputedly divine revelation of March 14, preceding. One may reasonably wonder whether his knowledge of Strang's readiness in debate and his powers of invective was not responsible for the disinclination to encounter him. In the summer of 1845 Strang had pronounced upon the group of leaders at Nauvoo this curse, with which Hyde was, of course, familiar: "as for those who, as gospel ministers, have assumed to teach such damning, soul-destroying doctrines (that deceit, fraud, lying, perjury, plundering unbelievers, polygamy, fornication and adultery are required by the command of God in the upbuilding of his kingdom). In the name of God and the Lord Jesus Christ; may their bones rot in the living tomb of their flesh; may their flesh generate from its own corruptions a loathsome life for others; may their blood swarm with a leprous life of motelike, ghastly corruption feeding on flowing life, generating chilling agues and burning fevers. May peace and home be names forgotten to them, and the beauty they have betrayed to infamy; may it be to their eyes a crawling mass of putridity and battening corruption; its delicate hues a sickly light that flows from universal corruption; its auburn tresses the posthumous growth of temples of crawling worms; its fragrant breath the blast of perdition. With desires insatiate may each gratification turn to burning bitterness and glowing shame." Voree *Herald*, April, 1846.

Viewing the results of this first invasion of the East, the Brighamite leaders at Nauvoo might well manifest a lively concern for the future of their cause and a corresponding bitterness toward their hated rival, for it seems apparent that Strang had made alarming progress toward capturing the Mormon strongholds from Illinois to the Atlantic. Quite different, however, was the outcome of the contest in England. To England proceeded Hyde, Taylor, and Parley P. Pratt, fresh from their encounters with the Strangite proselyters in Philadelphia and Boston.‡ Hard on their heels followed Lester Brooks and Martin Harris of the Strangite deputation to the English Church, appointed at the Kirtland conference in August. The one really able member of this deputation, however, Moses Smith, had been kept at home by reason of a schismatic disaffection at Voree; Martin Harris was ignorant, vain, and foolish, a liability rather than an asset to any cause to which he might adhere, while Brooks proved totally incapable of coping with men of the character of Hyde and Taylor.

Instead, therefore, of avoiding their opponents, as they had done in America, the Brighamite leaders sought to engage them in debate, heaping meanwhile, unmeasured abuse upon them and upon Prophet Strang, their leader, in the columns of the Liverpool *Millennial Star*, the organ of the Church in England.* No language however extreme, no comparisons however odious, were spared in the effort to overwhelm the Strangite delegation, and maintain intact the authority of the Twelve in Great Britain. "Polecats," "swine," and "sons of Satan" are but characteristic samples of the designations applied by these apostles of God to men who had been distinguished by years of faithful service in the selfsame Church these apostles essayed to lead. On November 15, 1846, the *Star* came out with a series of "Sketches of Notorious Characters," the subjects of the sketches being Strang, Brooks, and Harris. Strang was described as the

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* Voree *Herald*, September, 1846. † *Ibid.*, August, 1846.

‡ Liverpool *Millennial Star*, VIII, 92.

> successor of Sidney Rigdon, Judas Iscariot, Cain (the brother and murderer of Abel) & Co. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of His Most Gracious Majesty, Lucifer the I, assisted by his allied contemporary advisers, John C. Bennett, William Smith, G. J. Adams, and John E. Page, Secretaries of Legation.

Brooks was represented as an elder in the Church of Ohio who had associated himself with a "notorious speculator" to cheat the Saints out of their farms by persuading them to exchange their improved Ohio farms for a larger area of wild land in Illinois. Only their implicit confidence in Brooks induced them to deal with the speculator, and when they got to Illinois they found he had no such lands and they had lost their farms "completely." Thus Brooks had had the "honour of betraying the interests of his best friends into the hands of a consummate enemy," and for this he was haled before the church authorities and "cursed before God and man." Now he had come, as a Strangite apostle, to preach "purity, reformation, and good things" to the Saints in England.

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* See editorial and other references in *ibid.*, VIII (October–December, 1846), 92–175, especially pp. 93, 98, 120, 122–126, 137–138, 140, 185.

Of Martin Harris a still more damning account was given. One of the original witnesses to the Book of Mormon, he had yielded to the spirit and temptation of the Devil; "filled with the rage and madness of a demon," he had flown from one thing to another as if bereft of reason. For this he had been expressly condemned of God through his mouthpiece, Prophet Smith. But there was no need to warn the Saints against him, "for his own unbridled tongue will soon show out specimens of folly enough to give any person a true index to [his] character." In this the editor prophesied truly, for even Strang admits that all prospect of success of the English mission was destroyed through the folly of Harris.* The failure was of vast moment to the future of Mormonism. To the steady tide of reinforcements in men and money which flowed from England was largely due whatever measure of success was achieved by the Brighamite Saints in Utah; while Strang, almost at the beginning of his ministry, was completely shut out from this source of power and development. Two years later (May, 1848) a final appeal was addressed by the "True Shepherd" of the flock "to the Saints emigrating from Great Britain and Ireland to America" to ignore the Godless usurpation of the Twelve, who would lead them to destruction, and to foregather into the fold prepared by God for them at Voree and Beaver Island.† It was a powerful argument, but it fell, as might have been expected, upon deaf ears.

* Voree *Herald*, June 14, 1849.

† Printed in *The Diamond*, chap. v.

CHAPTER IV

The Garden of Peace

THE Prophet returned from his invasion of the East to the Garden of Peace at Voree to encounter a dangerous schismatic revolt on the part of a large section of those who had so recently flocked to his banner—the first of a long series of heresies which were to sadden his life and bring him to ruin in the end. One of the happiest characterizations ever perpetrated by Theodore Roosevelt was the designation of a certain type of radicals as the "lunatic fringe" of society. One can hardly read extensively in the literature of early Mormonism without becoming impressed with the thought that he is dealing chiefly with this lunatic fringe. Men who had broken with the established order, both of government and religion; who believed implicitly in a Prophet, supposed to be in daily direct communion with God on subjects, oftentimes, of the most trivial character; who possessed the gift of tongues and the power of miraculous healing,—in a word, men who submitted blindly their dearest interests in life to the dictates of a supposedly inspired autocrat, and to whom miraculous visions and supernatural visitations were matters of ordinary occurrence,—could hardly be noted for stability of judgment or conservatism of action. Added to this general tendency to bend to the latest breeze that blew was the undoubted fact that numerous erratic individuals professed Mormonism for purely selfish reasons and were interested in the Church only to the extent that they hoped to make something out of it. In the first flush of success Strang attracted many of this character to his standard. Most of them had little to lose in any event, whether of reputation or of goods, and they joined the new movement in the hope of acquiring power or property, or both, as the case might be. When it speedily appeared that there was room for but one ruler in the Strangite organization, and that the Prophet had both the will and the ability to direct the activities of his followers, both the honest vagarists and the insincere self-seekers manifested their disappointment by schismatic revolt.

The first of these movements came to a head in the early autumn of 1846. To the gathering of the Saints at Voree had flocked as precious a band of visionaries and rascals as ever scuttled a ship or a reputation. Disappointed ambition finding room for expression under the guise of advocacy of various doctrinal vagaries was responsible for the revolt of the "Pseudos," as it came to be known, in the summer and autumn of 1846. As early as the April conference contention had been joined over the question whether Mormons who came over to the Strangite organization from the Brighamite or other factions should be required to submit to baptism and joining the Church anew. The commitments the Prophet had made to such men as Bennett, Adams, and Page required him to combat this proposal and by reason of his opposition it was defeated; but many of his followers, among them Aaron Smith, under whose guidance Strang had himself become a Mormon, opposed this decision of the question. The real reason for their opposition, it seems apparent, proceeded from their disinclination to be associated with the type of men by whom Strang was surrounding himself. This distaste finds clear expression in an interesting letter to Strang from a correspondent at Ottawa, the scene of his initial proselyting triumph. Referring to Bennett and

Adams she observed:* "You cannot be surprised that we are unwilling to fellowship men whose moral character is so bad that even the Twelve could not tolerate them."

The smoldering fires of discontent were fanned into open conflagration over an issue which Bennett precipitated upon the infant Church. "I have many things to tell you when I come [to Voree], that I cannot commit to paper—some *very important indeed*," he had written the Prophet in one of his early letters.† Soon after his arrival at Voree the ever resourceful General-in-Chief produced an apple of discord which shook the community to its foundation and for a time bade fair to bring early ruin upon Strang's prophetic career. In the heyday of Bennett's popularity at Nauvoo, Joseph Smith had brought forth a revelation which provided, among other things, for the establishment after his death of a "Halcyon Order," the "pattern" of which was communicated by Smith to Bennett with the charge upon the latter that he should proceed to establish the order after the anticipated death of the Prophet (with which the revelation dealt) should have taken place.‡ Bennett had apostatized a year later, Smith was killed in June, 1844, and now, two years after this, Bennett returned to the Mormon fold as a member of the First Presidency of the Strangite Church, bringing with him his knowledge of Smith's projected "Halcyon Order."

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* The letter is dated July 15 [1846] and signed merely "L. L." Various circumstances induce the surmise that the writer was Strang's sister-in-law. In any event she was a woman of evident refinement and education, a Saint but not a fanatic, who was pathetically anxious to retain her faith in Strang's prophetic claims.

† Strang MSS, letter of Bennett to Strang, June 2, 1846.

‡ It was on this "revelation" of April 7, 1841, that Sidney Rigdon subsequently based his claim to the headship of the Church. It does not appear in the published Doctrines and Covenants of the Mormon Church, and orthodox Mormons evidently regard it as an invention of Rigdon, whose prophetic claims it seems designed to subserve. With this issue, however, we have here no concern; it is clear that immediately upon the arrival of Bennett at Voree, he and Strang fell to concocting a secret order, the establishment of which threw the community into a bitter controversy, and the revelation of Smith of April 7, 1841, coming to us from a source widely removed both in space and time from the squabbles going on at Voree in 1846, supplies a probable if not conclusive explanation as to the place of origin of the idea back of Strang and Bennett's new order. Whether Rigdon ever published the revelation I am unaware, not having had access to the

The secret dealings of God with his prophets it is not open to the historian to explore; but it seems a somewhat remarkable coincidence that promptly upon the arrival of Bennett, Strang received a lengthy revelation commanding the Saints, among other things, to build a temple at Voree, wherein, under his ministration, the "mysteries of the kingdom" should be revealed to them.* But the Prophet was enjoined to "take a great covenant" of all to whom he should teach these mysteries, and the wrath of God would fall upon all who should break the covenant they had taken. The work of establishing the new Order of the Illuminati, as it was known, began at once.† On July 6, Strang was created Imperial Primate of the Order and Bennett its General-in-Chief; while "chevaliers," "earls," "marshals," and "cardinals" following in due array.‡ The ceremony of the covenant-taking, however, seems to have been deferred for the present.

Before the coming of Bennett to Voree, Strang had made

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publications of the Rigdonite faction. His "first counsellor," Stephen Post, showed it to his brother, Warren Post, of the Strangite Church, and the copy made by the latter in 1874 is in his manuscript Personal History, pp. 75–78.

* The revelation is in the Chronicles of Voree, pp. 88–93. It has been printed by Watson, *Revelations of James J. Strang*, pp. 8–10.

† A document in the Strang MSS which contains a portion of the initiation ceremonial affirms that "Constantine the Great, after his defeat at Magentius, received from heaven an express command to institute the 'Order of the Illuminati' for the defence of the Christian religion. This command was brought by an angel who held in his hand a cross of gold."

‡ The secret covenant taken, some of the ritual, and lists of those who entered the order are contained in a manuscript volume until recently belonging to Henry Denio of Lamoni, Iowa, a grandson of Strang. This, together with Strang's diary, came to Denio from his grandmother, Strang's third wife, Betsy McNutt Strang.

arrangements for the eastern tour described in the preceding chapter, and despite the threatening situation of affairs at home he felt compelled to hurry away to fulfil his engagements. Before starting he appealed to the faithful in a three-hour address of "pathetic and burning eloquence"* to refrain from controversy and discord. Notwithstanding, the contention was soon renewed, the establishment of the secret order affording a new occasion of offense to the dissatisfied, and in the absence of the Prophet a plot was hatched for his overthrow. The leaders in this enterprise were Isaac Scott, Collins Pemberton, and William E. McLellin. Associated with them were men like Aaron Smith and Reuben Miller who had given ample testimony of their belief in Strang's divine calling and had held important offices in his church. Pemberton journeyed to Chicago and there influenced the local stake of Mormonism to pass a vote rejecting Prophet Strang, "not as in transgression but as an imposter from the beginning."† Miller brought out a pamphlet, entitled *James J. Strang Weighed in the Balance and Found Wanting*, canvassing adversely the claims of Strang to the Presidency,‡ and charging that he and Bennett had instituted a grossly improper secret association at Voree.

The church leaders retorted with sweeping denials, and, as usual in Mormon factional controversies, with charges of criminal and immoral practices against their opponents. Thus, Pemberton was characterized as "a lying, licentious, perfidious, pseudo-Mormon"; others were "guilty of lascivious and abominable iniquities, such as teaching and proclaiming the spiritual wife doctrine." All Pseudos were

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* Voree *Herald*, February 25, 1847. † *Ibid*.

‡ Refutations of this pamphlet by Strang and others are printed in the Voree *Herald* for October and November, 1846, and January 21, 28, February 11, and 25, 1847. The letter of "L. L.," cited *ante*, p. 49, contains an interesting testimonial to Miller's character and religious zeal, together with an earnest appeal to Strang to explain the occasion of his apostasy.

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seized with a moral leprosy; "their feet take hold on hell." Such was the character of the accusations hurled by the church leaders.* But the Pseudos were not thus to be silenced. Scott and one or two others brought out, on the press of the Elkhorn *Western Star*, two or three issues of a paper called the *New Era*, which purported to be published at Voree, and the contents of which were devoted to assaults upon the Strangite organization. Of more enduring import, the apostates set up a rival church organization under the presidency of Aaron Smith. It seems to have been liberally infected with the spiritual wife doctrine and other vagaries, and for the remainder of Strang's career at Voree this "Brighamite" organization continued to play the rôle of gadfly to the Prophet.

Such a turmoil of schism as the one we have all too inadequately sketched could hardly fail to be attended by serious consequences to the infant Church. The more immediate consequence at Voree was a series of trials held during the closing months of 1846, which resulted in purging the Church of the principal offenders and the filling of the offices they had held with new appointees. Abroad, the damage to the progress of the Strangite movement was extensive, as numerous reports and letters show. Two illustrations may be offered in this connection. Under the leading of William E. McLellin, the "stormy petrel" of Mormonism, the Kirtland stake, which Strang had reorganized in August, 1846, within the short space of four months was so completely lost that in December following, God through his mouthpiece Strang, was moved to pronounce upon it a curse like unto that pronounced upon Sodom of old.* It should be "a waste and a desolation," a den of wickedness which should not be cleansed until those who had polluted it were utterly destroyed. The substance of the apostates should waste, their houses fall, their land fail of its increase, and its waters dry up. It was to be the seat of Satan, the gathering place of unclean things.

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* It is difficult for one unversed in the literature of early Mormonism to realize the distressing frequency with which charges of most shocking moral delinquency were bandied about among the Saints. Perhaps no better illustration of this state of mind and the complacency with which it was viewed can be afforded than by reciting the case of Hazen Aldrich. On December 16, 1846, he was formally brought to trial before the Voree stake on charges preferred by General Bennett of "schism, heresy, mischief-making, diabolism, libel, and supererogating the spiritual wife doctrine." The last charge, reduced to plain English, was that he had committed incest with his daughter. The charges were sustained by the testimony, among others, of Bennett and Strang himself, and by unanimous vote Aldrich was cut off from the Church (Chronicles of Voree, pp. 130–131). Yet two months later we find this man, who should ere now have been behind prison bars, addressing a letter, through the columns of the Voree *Herald*, to the Saints in commendation of Bennett and announcing the intention, upon recovery from a case of illness, of writing the "brethren a series of articles on the important subject of practical religion—such religion as we ought to live by and would wish to die by." Voree *Herald*, February 11, 1847. Comment upon such a situation would seem to be as "supererogatory" as the crime of which Aldrich was convicted by his fellows.

Far more serious in its ultimate effects than the loss of Kirtland was the wrecking of the English mission which had been appointed at the Kirtland conference. From that conference Aaron Smith had hurried home to play his part in the revolt we have just described. His brother Moses who was to have led the English mission followed him to Voree, seeking to placate him and win him from the schismatic course on which he was bent. In this Moses Smith failed, and in the resulting turmoil he was prevented by lack of funds and other obstacles from embarking upon the mission.† The complete failure of Lester Brooks and Martin Harris to win over the English Saints, and the far-reaching consequences of this, both for the future of Strangism and of the Brighamite faction, have already been described.

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* Printed in Voree *Herald*, January 21, 1847.

† *Ibid.*, May 15, 1849; Chronicles of Voree, *passim*, especially report of October, 1846, conference at Voree.

By the beginning of 1847 the church leaders began to congratulate themselves that the fold had been purged of apostates and concord had been restored to the Church. But alas for the misnamed Garden of Peace, a renewal of the storm, more violent and far-reaching in its effects than the outbreak which had just been surmounted, was at hand. On New Year's day the faithful at Voree indulged in a feast of food and love, in the course of which the Eucharist was administered and speeches were made by Strang, Bennett, Greenhow, James M. Adams, and U. C. H. Nickerson.* The next day, January 2, Strang resumed the work of establishing the Order of the Illuminati by introducing to the initiates his secret covenant. It did not remain secret very long, for the apostate band at Voree, promptly gaining possession of it, struck off two thousand copies and distributed them broadcast to all who might be interested.† Further, they hotly pressed the charge through the columns of their temporary organ, the Elkhorn *New Era*, and other papers, that an undemocratic and improper secret order, whose members were banded together to carry on works of iniquity and to screen each other from justice, was being promoted by

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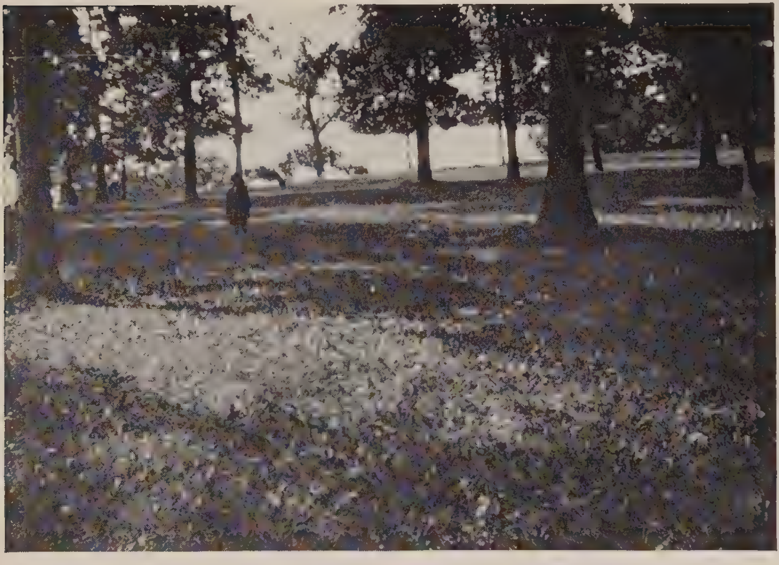
* Before another New Year's day appeared all of these men except Nickerson and the Prophet himself were cut off from the Church, while the excommunication of Nickerson followed shortly afterward.

† In later years both Willard Griffith and Isaac Scott claimed the credit for this enterprise. For Scott's story see his letter in Lamoni (Iowa) *Saints' Herald*, December 29, 1888. The apostates did not have an exact or complete copy of the covenant, although it was substantially correct as far as it went. Possibly this circumstance is explained by Griffith's testimony in the Independence Temple Lot case (*Plaintiff's Abstract*, pp. 463–464) that he and his sister wrote out the copy from memory. For the secret covenant see, in addition to the sources already cited, the several issues of the Voree *Herald* (especially those for November, 1846, and February 11 and 25, 1847); Wingfield Watson, *Prophetic Controversy No. 3; Or the Even Balances by Which Isaac Scott, Chauncey Loomis* [and others] *Are Weighed and Found Wanting* (Bay Springs, Mich., 1889), pp. 36, 41; and, most important of all, Strang's manuscript record of the covenant, signers, rites, etc., owned by Henry Denio of Lamoni, Iowa.

WHITE RIVER AND MILL POND AT VOREE

From photograph taken in 1928 by Donald L. Quaife.



LOOKING UP THE HILL OF PROMISE AT VOREE

The child marks the spot where the Voree plates were found. Photographed in 1928 by Donald L. Quaife.

Strang and Bennett at Voree. They ridiculed the supposedly miraculous illumination of heads of initiates which had been perpetrated under Strang's supervision the evening of January 2, saying the Prophet had tricked his deluded followers by rubbing their heads with a mixture of phosphorus and olive oil.*

The reply of the Prophet and his associates to these accusations was notably lacking in candor. They damned the character of the Pseudo leaders by printing a series of statements certifying to their guilt in various infamous actions of past years.† This play to the galleries aside, they solemnly denied the existence of any secret order at Voree, "repugnant to or inconsistent with the Book of Doctrines and Covenants."‡ As to the secret covenant which the Pseudos had pretended to publish to the world, it was a "most miserable and gross perversion" of the oath actually taken by the Illuminati, which was a proper and harmless oath; as to the pretended Grand Council, "it is proper to say, and we say it most explicitly, that no such council exists, and none such ever has existed at Voree."§

After the lapse of eighty years Strang's own copy of the secret covenant has come to light, and it becomes possible to pass impartial judgment upon it and upon the merits of the debate which was waged so zealously concerning it. The Pseudo version of the covenant, far from being a "gross perversion," erred chiefly through understatement. Had the oath as really administered to Strang's followers been published to the world, the blow to his organization would have been far more crushing than was the one suffered from the Pseudo version of it. If, as all the officials of the Church at Voree solemnly claimed, it was not "repugnant to the Book of Doctrines and Covenants," it was at any rate repugnant to the obligation of loyalty to the government of the United States. Beginning with a declaration of belief in God, Jesus Christ, the Church of Latter Day Saints, "and in James J. Strang, the Prophet of God," after a pledge never to reveal the secrets of the Order, the oath continued:

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* Isaac Scott later claimed that he obtained possession of the bottle containing the remainder of the mixture and himself repeated the "miracle" to a "packed house of spectators." Lamoni *Saints' Herald*, December 29, 1888.

† Several such certificates are reprinted in Watson's *Prophetic Controversy No. 3*, pp. 37–38. See also the contemporary issues of the Voree *Herald*.

‡ Statement of December 13, 1846, signed by fifty-five members of the Church including every official living at Voree except Strang and Bennett. Printed in November, 1846, Voree *Herald* (which was not issued until mid-December). This statement was made, of course, before the affair of January 2, 1847, but it bears none the less directly upon the subject of the secret association which had been instituted in July, 1846, and over which controversy had waged throughout the remainder of the year. The miraculous illumination of January 2 merely afforded fresh matter for controversy.

§ Voree *Herald*, November, 1846.

> And I do further, in like manner, promise, covenant and swear that I will uphold sustain and obey the said James J. Strang and his lawful successors, if any he has, each in his time as the Imperial primate and actual sovereign Lord and King on Earth and as my true and lawful Sovereign wheresoever and in whatsoever kingdom state or dominion I may be; and in preference to the laws, commandments and persons of any other Kings, Potentates, or States whatsoever, and will yield obedience to the revelations he shall give; the Laws made by the Grand Council of Nobles of God's Kingdom, with his concurrence; and the decrees he shall make, as the Supreme Law, above and superceding all laws, obligations, and mandates of any other person, authority, or power whatsoever.

By other clauses of the covenant the initiated renounced "without reserve and without regret," "all allegiance to any and every other Potentate State and Nation"; and swore to keep and uphold order, subordination, and the rights of superiors, councilors, and nobles in the Order. Of the latter class (passing over Primate, Viceroys, and General-in-Chief) 132 noblemen, "chosen from the various ranks of the Nobility" were to constitute the Grand Council, seventy of whom should constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The document concluded with a paragraph invoking the curse of God and man upon any who should be "so corrupt, treacherous, and abominable" as to violate the covenant he had taken.

The Pseudos were correct, then, in charging that an undemocratic and improper secret order had been instituted at Voree, and the intended effect of the solemn official denials published by the church authorities was in plainest contravention of the truth. The leading architect of the opposition to Strang in the months following the affair of January 2 (which was, in fact, but the prolongation of the schism of 1846) was William E. McLellin, temporarily of Kirtland, Ohio. McLellin was a quack doctor and an expert demagogue, who in the course of a long career succeeded in adhering to and then deserting almost every faction in the history of Mormonism. He had wormed himself into the confidence of Prophet Smith in the early thirties, only to play the rôle of an Iscariot in the hour of Smith's direst danger at the hands of the Missouri mob.* When, in 1846, news of Strang's movement was spread abroad, McLellin, who was seeking to eke out a living by the practice of medicine in Ohio, perceived a new field for exploitation. He had been of old a crony of John C. Bennett, and when that renegade Mormon floated into Voree and into his old position as one of the First Presidency, McLellin entertained visions of attaining a like success for himself.

Although he was restored to his old apostleship† at the

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* Mormons charged that he put himself at the head of an anti-Mormon company; helped rob them of their property, and at a time when Smith and other leaders were in momentary danger of slaughter by the mob, said: "I wish to God that I could see Jo Smith brought into the public square and beheaded, for if the God damned rascal is taken to Liberty he will escape." Voree *Herald*, January 28, 1847.

† McLellin had been one of the Twelve under Joseph Smith. Upon

October Voree conference, his further hopes were disappointed and in less than three months, as we have already seen, he engineered the revolt at Kirtland. Prophet Strang, to whom he had so recently subscribed allegiance, was now found to be an impostor, and under heavenly guidance McLellin undertook to effect a new Mormon reorganization with David Whitmer as the divinely designated leader.* He started the *Ensign of Liberty* at Kirtland, which came out at infrequent intervals for one or two years. More important, he carried the war into Voree, as Strang had carried it to Nauvoo in 1846, and reorganized the apostate group which had set up an organization some months earlier under the leadership of Aaron Smith. In October, 1847, McLellin visited Voree in person and there engaged in a joint public debate with Strang over the doctrines and facts at issue between them.† In this contest the superior intellect and refinement of Strang stood out in marked contrast to the ignorance and boorishness of his opponent. But it was a Pyrrhic victory at best, for all such discord, as Strang was statesman enough to perceive, but served to discredit Mormonism generally in the eyes of the gentile world.

Unless the mental state of the community at Voree was abnormal in the period under discussion, the moral state was deplorable. The presumption seems fair that there was a mixture of both of these conditions, although it is impossible to discover what degree of each was present. Throughout the summer and autumn of 1847 a large num-

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joining Strang's organization he was, like Bennett, William Smith, Page, Adams, and others, given the standing he had enjoyed under Smith.

* For an account of McLellin's doings at this period see letter of Austin Cowles in Voree *Herald*, May 18, 1848; also, *Herald*, *passim*. Whitmer was one of the original witnesses to the Book of Mormon. He held aloof from McLellin's overtures for a time, but eventually acceded to them.

† Printed (incomplete) in Voree *Herald*, issues of October 28 to December 2, 1847.

ber of church trials took place, the usual result of which was conviction, with the consequent excommunication of the culprit and his "delivery to the buffetings of Satan."* In some instances the accused admitted their guilt and indicated they no longer desired to be connected with the Strangite organization. In other cases they failed to appear for trial, and judgment went against them by default.† In a few cases the charges were warmly contested, and failed through absence or inadequacy of evidence.

A new feature of the situation was the trial of a considerable number of women, in some instances on doctrinal charges, in others on those of misconduct. One or two illustrations of cases of this kind may prove instructive. On July 4, Mary Nickerson was accused by Louisa Young before the High Council of the stake of Voree of slander and un-Christian conduct. The accused was the wife of U. C. H. Nickerson, one of the most active leaders of the Church, who at the April conference preceding had been ordered to go on mission to the far West to win back the Saints who were migrating to Utah. After testimony by numerous witnesses, both male and female, the president of the Council ruled that Mrs. Nickerson had been exonerated, whereupon the accuser took an appeal to the High Council of the Church. Eight weeks later Mrs. Young was herself brought to trial before the same council to which she had haled Mrs. Nickerson, on a charge of apostasy. She pled

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* These observations are based on Chronicles of Voree for the period in question.

† Reuben Miller, replying to a notice to appear before the High Council for trial, denied his guilt and also denied the authority of the Strangite Church: "I am not a member of your church, and I do not wish to have anything to do with the unfruitful works of darkness when I know it. You will if you consider me a member of your church do me the favour to cut me off immediately. The charges against me I care nothing about—they are such as the devil always brings against those that opose him in his mad career." Strang MSS, letter of Miller to Strang, December 23, 1846.

"not guilty," and while the trial was proceeding her husband appeared on the scene and "took her away in a forcible and un-Christianlike manner." The Council appointed a committee to "labor" with Mrs. Young, and meanwhile proceeded to excommunicate the husband, in company with a dozen other Saints, on the ground of apostasy. At a session of the Council four days later, on the strength of the committee's report, Mrs. Young was exonerated of the charge of apostasy; whereupon, "after some deliberation it was motioned and sustained unanimously that Sister Young be notified to appear before the High Council on the charges of adultery and lasciviousness at the next meeting." She duly appeared and pled "not guilty"; no witnesses appearing against her, the case was dismissed for want of evidence.*

Somewhat analogous to the foregoing was the case of John W. Crane, one of the minor officials of the Church. In October, Crane was brought to trial on charges of belief in spiritual wifery and of misappropriating church funds. He denied that he believed in the spiritual wife doctrine but admitted he had expressed a belief in "plurality of wives"; on more recent investigation of the matter, however, he had discarded this belief. The Council voted unanimously its satisfaction with this confession, and the remaining charges failed through lack of evidence. Less than three months later, however, Crane was again summoned to appear before the ecclesiastical bar for judgment. Instead, he sent in a "scurilous" letter, declining to attend. This time nine charges were laid against him—bearing false witness; profanity; heresy, in teaching that it is right to plunder unbelievers, and that Saints may have other women than one wife; attempting to seduce two young women; suing a brother at the law; making a hypocritical confession before

* Chronicles of Voree, pp. 144–148.

the High Council; misrepresenting the teachings of the Presidency; obtaining property by false pretenses; and misappropriating church property. Each of these charges was proved by the testimony of from one to seven witnesses, and Crane was excommunicated and delivered over to the buffetings of Satan.

Among the crowd of Saints who fell from grace (and the Church) during the summer and autumn of 1847 were William Smith, apostle and patriarch, and General-in-Chief John C. Bennett. Smith's story is not entirely devoid of pathetic aspects. A crude, ignorant man, he had the courage following the death of his brothers, Joseph and Hyrum, to brave the wrath of the Twelve at Nauvoo, and despite their threats and cajolery he induced the whole Smith family to reject their leadership. Among many and grave defects of character, his devotion to his aged mother and other relatives under circumstances of great destitution stands out as a redeeming feature. He had been importuned to join the Pseudos in the summer of 1846, but had remained loyal to Strang, to the great delight of the official church organ. The occasion of his defection a few months later is not entirely clear. A long letter which he addressed to Strang on Christmas day, 1846, expounds in vigorous and pungent language his dissatisfaction over a proposal which had been made to associate "Young Joseph" Smith with him in the patriarchal order. The office of patriarch had been created by Joseph, soon after the founding of the Church, for the benefit of his father, who for a fee would bestow upon the faithful a patriarchal blessing. Upon the death of "Father" Smith, Hyrum had succeeded to the patriarchal duties and emoluments, and William now claimed them by "lineage" and by blessing. He represented forcefully that a "superfuaty of Patriarchs" would destroy the benefits of his office, and warned the Prophet that he would not submit to treatment at his hands which he had resisted at the hands of the Twelve. At this time Smith was still in Illinois with his mother, and the removal of the latter to Voree was to take place the following spring. Ere the time arrived, however, the discovery was made (or the charge was trumped up) that the Patriarch had been guilty of adultery on the occasion of his first visit to Voree in July, 1846. Although Smith undertook to defend himself, he was convicted of the offense against which God had of old admonished McLellin,* and at the October conference was banished from the Church. The disgusting testimony submitted in support of the charge against Smith may have been untrue: if true, it convicts him of moral conduct comparable to that of a plantation slave; if false, it illustrates anew the readiness of the Saints to impute such conduct to their most prominent leaders and officials.

The breach between Strang and Bennett, like the earlier breach between Bennett and Joseph Smith, is shrouded in mystery. At the same October conference which witnessed William Smith's downfall, the Prime Minister was formally charged with "apostasy, conspiracy to establish a stake by falsehood, deception, etc., and various immoralities," and he was expelled from the Church and delivered over to the buffetings of Satan.†

Although no man could be more vocal on occasion than Bennett, for some reason now unknown he accepted his dismissal quietly. Withdrawing to Plymouth, Massachusetts, the home of his wife's parents, he devoted himself, like another Diocletian, to the unmartial calling of raising chickens. Notwithstanding his breach with Strang, he retained a watchful interest in the progress of the Church, and three years later, when the Kingdom was established at Beaver Island, we find him making overtures to be taken once more into the fold, and expressing a feeling of warmest friendship for the Prophet. At this time he was publishing a book on the art of poultry raising, and here, appropriately, he may be allowed to disappear from our story.

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* On October 25, 1831, Joseph Smith had had a revelation from God addressed to McLellin in which after blessing him "for receiving mine everlasting covenant," and directing him to go forth and preach the gospel, he was warned to "commit no adultery, a temptation with which thou hast been troubled."

† Chronicles of Voree, pp. 150, 160.

Unlike Bennett, the Patriarch, with peculiar smallness of soul, set forth upon an eastern lecture tour, exposing to the gentile world the frauds of Mormonism in general and of Strangism in particular.* Among other things, he stated that Strang had made the Voree plates from an old brass kettle; that the covenant illumination was a trick performed by the use of phosphorus; and that Strang contended that all biblical miracles were similar cheats. After all which, the erstwhile Patriarch sought a new career in Mormonism by attempting to set up a new reorganization with himself as the Prophet.

To the end of his career Prophet Strang was compelled to contend with an ever fresh crop of apostasies, being assassinated at the last by a group of renegades from his own flock. Almost without exception, too, these apostates, regardless of how prominent a part they had themselves taken in the Strangite organization, on leaving it poured out unmeasured abuse upon their former leader and associates. In this they incriminated themselves, of course, and the public might take its choice, as Strang was quick to point out,† whether to believe them rascals formerly or liars now. This argument cut both ways, however, for in practically every instance these men had received, while in good standing with Strang, repeated certificates of character and good conduct, while as soon as they apostatized they were found to be destitute of all decency and virtue. There is undeniably a considerable measure of truth in the orthodox explanation that the apostates were insincere or knaves from the beginning and that as fast as their real character was discovered it was necessary for the Prophet to cut them off.* But this explains only in part the steady procession of seemingly earnest men who "gathered" to Voree and Beaver Island, oftentimes at the cost of great personal sacrifice, professing to be led by direct divine revelation, and after a short period of time turned away anathematizing Strang and all his works.

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* See Voree *Herald*, August 17, 1848, "appeal" of Strang; *ibid.*, January 4, 1849, letter of Peter Hess; *ibid.*, March 28, 1850, letter of Strang.

† See, e.g., *ibid.*, August 17, 1848.

Whatever the explanation, it is abundantly clear that the conduct of the Saints themselves drove the Prophet to despair and made of the Garden of Peace a veritable temple of discord. In August, 1848, he issued, through the columns of the official church paper, an "appeal" to his followers to which anyone who has hankerings after a prophetic career may well afford to devote earnest consideration.† Recounting his arduous labors and upright course since assuming the prophetic office, and reminding his hearers of his character and good repute prior thereto, Strang proceeded to show that he was daily subjected to intolerable abuse and suspicion, not by the gentile world, which had been kind to him thus far, but by his own followers, who lent a willing ear to the inventions, however vile, of the apostates.

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* It is also true, as the writer is compelled to believe, that both Strang and Joseph Smith before him frequently viewed with complaisance the misdeeds of their followers as long as the latter proved submissive to the authority of the Prophet; and when they were cut off from the Church, the misconduct for which they were disciplined frequently afforded a convenient pretext rather than the real motive for the action taken. Strang's treatment of Bennett and George J. Adams affords a clear illustration of our point. The reputation of both was a stench in the nostrils of all decent-minded Saints, despite which Strang gave them the highest appointments in his Church, and in the face of repeated reports of misconduct, retained them in office as long as it suited his purpose to do so—Adams for more than four years.

† Voree *Herald*, August 17, 24, 1848.

> I last year spent six days [he said] in Jefferson County, New York, engaged three days in public preaching, and all that time, so that I scarcely got opportunity to sleep at all, with crowds of Saints and strangers, and during that time saw but three persons that I had ever seen before. There are certain doctrines of devils, which I had occasion to treat of, and which I set my face against as flint, publicly and privately, on all occasions. I never, by word, or by sign, or by silence, varied from the same unswerving testimony which I usually gave. And never in a single act, for a single moment did my example come short of my testimony. Yet I have now letters lying before me, written in that region, in which I am accused of criminal intercourse with more than forty different Saints there, including every sister in the church in that region of whom I have the slightest recollection, and several of whom I do not so much as know that they exist.
>
> Here in Voree my footsteps are dogged as with a shadow. I cannot step into a house but in a half hour it is known by half the neighborhood. And kindred spirits of Saints and apostates congregate together and the Saint begins, "What *do* you suppose Brother Strang has gone there for?" To which he gets the looked-for answer, "Anybody might know what a man goes where there is a woman for" (as though there was not usually a woman in every house), and pleased with the wit of such ribaldry, after a chuckle, or, if very sanctimonious, a groan, replies, "O I don't know. I don't think Brother Strang is quite so bad as that. Do you really think so?—But I wish he would be more prudent." And before the day is out, perhaps is urging me to call at his house, and complaining that I don't visit more. God speed the time when such wretches will go to their own place. . . . I am now reaping the bitter reward of their friendship in the blasting of that fair fame over which apostates and open enemies were powerless; and in the disgrace and infamy which by some

means has been heaped on all God's prophets, but on none more bitterly.

If such was the spiritual atmosphere in which the Prophet lived and moved, what were the material conditions of his life? If one may credit his own explicit testimony, he lived in utmost poverty, the while he supported a burden of toil beyond the ability of most men to bear. In the summer of 1847 he stated that, with no salary or income, he seldom had a week's supply of food in the house; in his journeys by boat he traveled deck passage; he had not a single suit of whole clothing, and he was forced to send his letters unsealed, for lack of money with which to purchase wafers.*

The home of Strang at Voree was in keeping with the clothing he wore. In July, 1846, God had commanded the faithful to build him a house, with a room in it for the work of translating ancient records.† Yet two years later a visitor to Voree describes the Prophet's residence as a "rudely made log house, about ten feet by fourteen, one story high, containing a chest or two, two beds, common low bedsteads, a small stove, [and] three or four chairs."‡ Darker still is the picture of the Prophet's circumstances sent out to the Saints abroad in December, 1848. They are asked to imagine him as coming to spend the evening:

> As you gather round the table [they are told], why does he yet linger at the fire? Do you know he has no overcoat? not a shred of flannel about him? Wears a summer vest? and both coat and pants are half worn? That he wears a straw hat at mid-winter? and he has been a prey to rheumatism for years. Well, let him warm by the fire. This is all the clothing he has. But do not help him to more; for if you do, as soon as he gets home he will divide with his brethren of the Order of Enoch, who are as bad off as he is. Give him nothing

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* Voree *Herald*, August 19, 1847.

† Recited in revelation of July 1, 1848.

‡ Voree *Herald*, October 26, 1848.

> but water to drink. It is so long since he has drunk anything else, he might not know what it was. Give him neither cake, pies, or sweetmeats. He will remember in bitterness that his children at home can have none.*

Under such material conditions, he toiled incessantly to promote the ingathering of the Saints. Constant travel under the most favorable conditions of those days was in itself an arduous undertaking. But Strang's poverty prevented him from enjoying such accommodations as there were. Thus, at midnight, July 4, 1849, he left Voree for a ride of twenty-seven miles to catch the morning boat at Racine *en route* to Beaver Island.† It was his third trip to Beaver this season, and for some months he had not slept in a bed two nights in a week. The Voree *Herald* was started in January, 1846, with less than a dozen subscribers.‡ It was kept up at the cost of infinite toils and struggles, "hoping often against hope" with every indication, oftentimes, that it could not be continued a day longer.

> Did you ever write [the Editor asked his readers in November, 1847] when your mind was dark and your head seemed spinning round like a great wheel? Or when all your ideas seemed lost in the bottom of a deep, dark well, from whence you could scarcely draw them up; and when, having got them marshalled in order, you would forget them or lose them in the darkness before you could write them down?

About the same time Strang arranged a joint debate with a certain Professor Graham of Michigan Central College, on the validity of the Mormon faith. Graham postponed the discussion, pleading occupation with other matters. In reply Strang told something of his own engagements. Besides domestic business which usually would employ the time of three or four men, he had editorial charge of a paper, pastoral care of a church scattered over a third of the earth, and an extensive private correspondence. All this without the aid of a clerk, and he was then waging two other public discussions with able opponents.

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* *Ibid.*, December 28, 1848. † *Ibid.*, July 5, 1849.

‡ *Ibid.*, November 25, 1847, November 9, 1848, and March 22, 1849.

CHAPTER V

The Upbuilding of Voree

FROM this dark picture of the Prophet's tribulations we turn to the more cheerful subject of his constructive labors and achievements at Voree. Despite the frequent schismatic upheavals, and the ever present poverty of the Saints, gradual, although slow, progress was made both in the upbuilding of Voree and of the Church abroad. In any discussion of this progress considerable attention must be devoted to its economic basis and aspects, since Strang was not merely the spiritual leader of a congregation, but as well the temporal ruler of a community which aspired to become a commonwealth. The original considerations which had served to commend the site of Voree as a location for the Saints were, indeed, economic. When Smith in the winter of 1844 deigned to consult Strang upon the possibility of finding a new location for the Saints, the latter promptly urged upon the Prophet the advantages of a location on White River in the vicinity of Burlington, Wisconsin. It would afford a healthy home for the mechanics and artisans from the northern and eastern states and from Europe, for whom the climate of Nauvoo was unsuitable; there would likewise be ample employment amid peaceable surroundings, thus relieving the economic pressure at Nauvoo. Smith was so impressed with the argument that he commissioned Strang and Aaron Smith to make a full investigation of the situation and report their findings to him. That report is lost, but anyone who is familiar with the history and development of this region can have little doubt as to the arguments Strang advanced.* The tide of white settlement had set into this section only half a dozen years before. It had moved rapidly, however, and by 1844 the government land had practically all passed under private control. But prices were still low, labor was in demand, and the surrounding country was developing rapidly. In short, the foundations of a commonwealth were being laid in one of the fairest agricultural regions on the face of the globe. The immediate site of Voree, on the banks of White River, was beautifully rolling and contained a stone quarry from the development of which much was anticipated.† Provided with the necessary capital, there was every reason for expecting that the characteristic industry of the Saints would soon make of Voree a flourishing center of civilization.

Although proselytes soon began flocking to Voree they came for the most part in a poverty-stricken condition, and the accumulation of worldly capital was slow. Lurid tales of the growth and wealth of the place were soon spread abroad through the gentile press. Strang deprecated such reports, and strove, through the Voree *Herald*, to make known to the world the actual facts.

> As the place began to be built last April [he said in September, 1846], principally by a plundered and exiled people, it certainly is

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* Isaac Scott, whose career as a Pseudo we have had occasion to note, asserted in later life that the whole enterprise at Voree originated in a fraudulent scheme for real estate speculation, the promoters of which were Strang and three associates who owned the land on the site of Voree. The original plan was to have Smith build up a stake at Voree; when he was killed, however, the schemers decided to make Strang Smith's successor as this "would make a sure thing of building up Voree." Lamoni *Saints' Herald*, December 29, 1888.

† This expectation was largely disappointed as the stone proved, on trial, too soft to have much commercial value. Proof of this is seen in the fact that the quarry has never been worked, except for a short period by the Saints, and is now regarded as valueless.

> not a very rich city. Its population dwell in plain houses; in board shanties, in tents, and sometimes many of them in the open air, and if any of those good Christians who say Voree is [nonexistent] will call here of a Sunday we will show them a congregation of from one to two thousand people* besides those who stay at home. The place is more prosperous than could have been expected in the present impoverished state of the church. All who come here find plenty of employment at good wages and a bountiful supply of all the necessaries of life at low prices. Men of all trades and occupations except idleness and sponging can be employed here to advantage.

Two years later a Saint newly arrived from Philadelphia gave this description of the place for the benefit of his eastern friends: There were three hundred to four hundred faithful Saints, half of them living in the communistic Order of Enoch. Round about were a "good number" of apostates,

> who once belonged to the church, but who now make it their business to beset every newcomer with all sorts of the vilest and most wicked accusations against the Saints, especially the Prophet, in which they not unfrequently succeed in destroying their faith. Voree [he continued] is a very pleasant country place, hardly having the appearance of a town, and almost destitute of public houses. Dwelling houses and work shops stand in the midst of cultivated fields, some of them far distant from the roads, and the headquarters of the Order of Enoch are on the top of the Hill of Promise, surrounded by an ancient forest of oak and hickory. Stretching away to the north is Gardner's Prairie, consisting of some 4,000 acres of grain fields with scarcely a tree in the entire space. The White River meadows at the south are nearly as extensive. The whole are surrounded by hills of moderate height, generally covered with timber. The place is healthy. Men who have a moderate amount of capital can successfully pursue almost any honest business. But as all kinds of work-shops are not established, those who are not able to set up in business might not find employ to their liking.†

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* If this was intended as a statement of the population of Voree, it was much exaggerated.

† Voree *Herald*, August 3, 1848.

About the same time (October, 1848) another visitor to Voree describes the home of Strang as a rude log house of one story, about ten by fourteen feet in size. His followers, "an intelligent and industrious community," live mostly in unfinished stone houses.

A full year later, however, in November, 1849, within a few months of the time when the headquarters of the Church were removed to Beaver Island, one of Strang's spokesmen at Voree, writing to the "brethren abroad" concerning conditions there stated that "quite a number" of houses had been finished within, and more were "in a state of progression."* Evidently in the four years devoted by Strang to the upbuilding of the place, from the spring of 1846 to 1850, no considerable material development was brought about, and with the hand of the leader removed, no long time was required to obliterate all physical evidence of a village having been developed here. Today Voree is but a memory, the only visible reminders of its former existence being the abandoned quarry site and mill pond, and a few unfilled cellar excavations.

Two wise measures instituted by Strang in the upbuilding of Voree are worthy of especial note. Legal provision was made against saloons ever being conducted there by the insertion of a condition to this effect in all real estate titles.† Speculation in land was also effectively discouraged by the device of the Prophet assuming control of the town site and offering lots to all comers for actual improvement at the uniform price of $50. Lots varied in size from one-fourth to a full acre, so that a building site four rods by ten could be had for $12.50.

Much of the economic life of Voree centered about the fiscal and communistic enterprises of the Church. The

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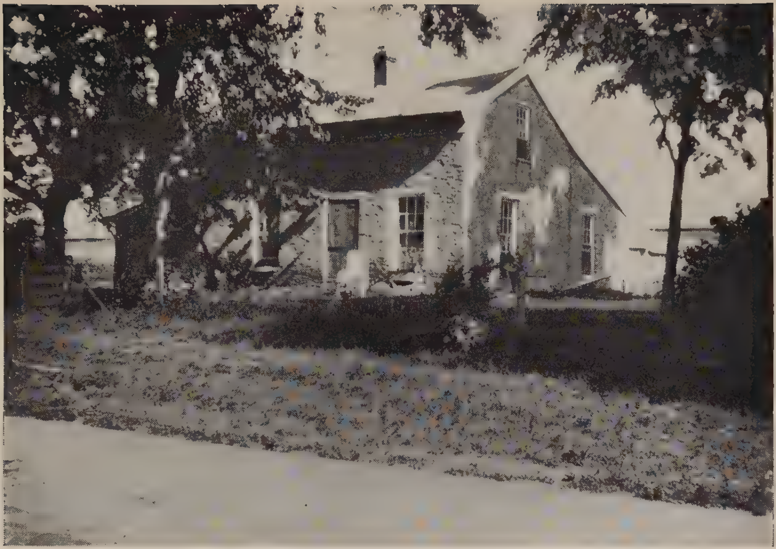
* S. P. Bacon in the Voree *Herald*, November 29, 1849.

† *Ibid.*, April, 1846.



HOME OF STRANG'S PARENTS AT VOREE

Here the Prophet was brought to die. From photograph taken in 1928 by Donald L. Quaife.

THE GARDEN OF PEACE IN RECENT YEARS

Cellar holes of Voree on crest of Hill of Promise. Photographed in 1928 by Donald L. Quaife.

founder of Mormonism had instituted the prudent course of having himself declared trustee in trust for the Church of all property belonging to it. Very early in the career of the Strangite organization the question of legal ownership of the temples at Nauvoo and Kirtland arose. Strang, as successor of Smith, put forward a vigorous claim to the control of both, on behalf of his church organization. His claim was ignored at Nauvoo, but at Kirtland, after a brief contest with agents of the Brighamite faction, he was successful in gaining control of the temple property. At the April, 1847, conference of the Church, Strang recommended the adoption of suitable rules for the administration of church property. A committee was appointed on the subject, and its report was unanimously adopted by the conference.* The First President was made trustee in trust for the Church, and all lands were to be held in his name. The Bishop was directed to keep a full account of all money and property received by him, and of all disbursements made. Tithing was enjoined upon the Saints, and provision was made for the publication of annual reports of all collections and disbursements.

The requirement upon the faithful to tithe constituted the fiscal foundation of the church organization. Provision to this effect had been made very early in the ministry of Strang by revelation received from God on January 17, 1845, the command being accompanied by the promise, if obeyed, "of the plates of the book that was sealed" to Strang, who would translate them for his followers. In the revelation of July 1, 1846, the Saints were urged to build a house for the Prophet, in which a room should be set apart for translations. At the same time they were commanded to build a temple at Voree after plans which God would supply to Strang; and a "strong tower" on the Hill of Promise, which should be "the beginning of the preparation whereby the poor may be exalted, and the oppressed lifted up, and all my servants made equal in their temporal things." As usual these commands were accompanied by glowing promises of good to accrue to the Saints as a reward for their fulfilment.

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* Printed in *ibid.*, July 8, 1847.

Notwithstanding, the tithes were not paid, and the work on the Temple and Tower lagged accordingly. The former building was to be a massive structure of stone, covering, with its several courts, two and one-half acres of ground.* The central feature was a great hall two hundred feet square, with walls eight feet thick. The floor and roof were to be of marble, and according to George J. Adams, who had seen many of the great cities of America, it would be, when finished, "the grandest building in the world."† The corner stone of the Temple was laid on October 6, 1847.‡ Slight progress was made, however, during the next year and a half. On April 8, 1849, the corner stone of the southeast tower was laid with as great show of ceremony as the community could compass.§ More work was done this season than in both the two preceding ones.‖ But this does not appear very impressive when we learn that for the entire year ending October 5, 1848, but $226.92 in cash and produce was contributed toward building the Temple.¶ Up to this time only the foundation of the southeast tower had been laid, a body of broken stone thirty-eight feet square and eight feet in depth in the ground. Meanwhile some work was being done on the Tower of Zion, and at the close of 1849 it was reported to be up one and one-half stories, plastered and furnished for winter, for twenty-five feet in length.*

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* The plan of the Temple, with cut, is given in the Voree *Herald*, October 28, 1847.

† Letter to Saints abroad, in *ibid.*, September 6, 1849.

‡ The services are described in *ibid.*, October 19, 1847.

§ *Ibid.*, April 15, 1849. There were to be twelve towers in all.

‖ Letter of S. P. Bacon in *ibid.*, November 29, 1849.

¶ In addition twenty or thirty days' labor had been performed, and two hundred days' more were available whenever desired. *Ibid.*, October 12, 1848.

These several community enterprises were closely connected with the communistic project which Strang imposed upon his followers under the name of the Order of Enoch. This Order, which was intended to embrace all the faithful, was formally instituted by Strang and a few of his followers in January, 1848. At the same time the lengthy annual pastoral letter of the Prophet to his Saints was wholly devoted to arguing the necessity of the communistic state for those who would win salvation. Already sixty members (counting children) had come into the Order. It had 560 acres of excellent land, several good stone buildings, a valuable water power, and a property in all worth $11,000, with an indebtedness of about $3,000. This was offered the Saints as "the home of the poor and the asylum of the oppressed"; all were urged to come, "without money and without price," to share in common each other's joys and sorrows, toils and possessions.†

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* *Ibid.*, November 29, 1849.

† The letter is printed in *ibid.*, February 3, 1848. There seems to be good reason for questioning whether the finances of the Order were in as good condition as Strang represented. In nothing did the Prophet more closely resemble Joseph Smith than in the lack of financial capacity. Among the Strang MSS is a letter from John Cole, written January 10, 1850, which sheds some light on the financial situation at Voree. The writer, along with half a dozen others, members of the Order of Enoch, had gone to the lead mines of western Wisconsin to prospect for lead with the laudable design of turning their gains into the church treasury. "To go [return] to Voree this winter is to impoverish the church," wrote Cole. "There is a plenty of hands to do the chores and there is a scarcity of meet and also grain for the teams."

The writer went on to relate that after a good deal of hard work, he and his associates had been compelled by the water to abandon their diggings, and to propose, since they were engaged in the Lord's work, that the Prophet should look in the Urim and Thummim "and tell us where we should get a

But the Saints came slowly into the Order of Enoch, notwithstanding this alluring invitation. At the close of 1848, we learn from an editorial,* about 150 persons were in the Order. They were supporting the *Herald*, and in general bearing the burden of church maintenance. On principle they eschewed the use of tea, coffee, and tobacco; to live within their income they were abstaining, also, from sugar, spices, green and dried fruit, and luxuries of every kind. In dress they were practicing a plainness from which even a Quaker might learn much.

Such a prospect did not impel any great rush of recruits to join the Order. On January 7, 1849, therefore, God strenuously denounced his Saints, through the mouth of Strang, for their failure to heed his commands.

> Ye have broken my commandments and despised mine authority [they are told], and my precepts have been to you a vain thing. Ye are a stiff-necked and rebellious people who delight in your own vanities and prefer your lusts to the chief of the things which God giveth.

To those who would pay their tithes and live in the Order of Enoch the prospect of flattering rewards was held out; those who would not do these things were to be cut off from God's favor. Other things were included in the revelation, particularly a strong injunction of obedience to Strang, who was "meeker than Moses and more patient than Job."†

The faithful still hung back, however, and in August, 1849, a new bait was held out to them. Among the theological doctrines which the founder of Mormonism had

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lead for the building of the temple and tower." "There is a plenty of means in the ground here if we [k]new where it is has not the Lord said he would give his saints the riches of the earth?" The reading of this letter should have given the Prophet a bad quarter of an hour, although we have no reason to suppose that it did. It illustrates admirably the guileless simplicity of many of his deluded followers.

* Voree *Herald*, December 28, 1848.

† Watson, *Revelations of James J. Strang*, pp. 14–17.

spun from an obscure scriptural text was that of baptism for the dead.* Briefly stated, the doctrine held out to the Saints the privilege of securing for their departed relatives the same spiritual advantages accruing from baptism that the departed might have gained for themselves had they undergone baptism in life.† The baptisms, along with the other church "mysteries," must take place in the Temple, secure from the gaze of the ungodly. Proper records must be kept against the day of judgment, and all must be done under the supervision of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The Saints at Voree had no Temple as yet, and they were, therefore, unable to begin the work of qualifying their loved ones for salvation. In this dilemma God sent the Prophet Elijah to Strang to inform the latter that He had determined to reward those Saints who had been faithful to Him by giving them a present dispensation to conduct baptisms for the dead at Voree "during their poverty" and until they should have time to build the Temple.‡ To this end White River, "from the bathing-pool unto the water wheel" was sanctified and made holy. A recorder of baptisms was to be ordained, whose records should also be "recorded in the archives of Heaven."

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* The doctrine is based on an interpretation of I Corinthians, xv. 29: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" Linn credits the revival of this doctrine among the Mormons to Sidney Rigdon. *Story of the Mormons*, p. 118. But Smith claimed, and deserves to bear, the responsibility of foisting it upon the Church.

† "[Christ] offers pardon, peace, holiness, and eternal life to the quick and the dead—the living on condition of faith and baptism for remission of sins; the departed on the same condition of faith in person, and baptism by a living kinsman in his behalf. It may be asked, will this baptism by proxy necessarily save the dead? We answer no; neither will the same necessarily save the living." Nauvoo *Times and Seasons*, May 1, 1841. For another exposition of the doctrine of baptism for the dead see Voree *Herald*, October 4, 1849.

‡ Revelation of August 7, 1849, Chronicles of Voree, pp. 194–198; printed in Watson, *Revelations of James J. Strang*, pp. 17–19.

But to whom should be accorded the privilege of redeeming their loved ones from purgatory? The message brought from God to Prophet Strang by Elijah gave this answer:

> All the faithful Saints who keep and abide in the order of Enoch; all who have paid tithing according to my law, for the building of a house unto my name in Voree, and for the upbuilding of my church; all who from this time forward will, and do, come up and do these things . . . and all who, standing in the priesthood, have labored faithfully in their several ministries from the time the commandment went forth to build a house unto my name in Voree.

Thus the whole matter was under the control of the priesthood, which meant, in the last analysis, of Prophet Strang. In his hands had been placed a leverage upon the action of his followers as powerful as any the wit of man ever devised. The measures necessary for putting the new ordinance in process of execution were taken at the church conference held at Voree two weeks after the revelation establishing it had been given.* Appointments of officials to administer and to record baptisms were made, and the whole was accepted by the congregation with entire unanimity. All being thus made ready, adjournment was taken to the river, when Prophet Strang proceeded to claim "by revelation of God" the redemption of the bodies of James Knox Polk, Oliver Cromwell, and Lord Byron. He was baptized severally for these worthies at the hands of President George J. Adams; after which Adams himself proceeded by revelation to redeem the bodies of Napoleon Bonaparte, Samuel Adams, John Adams, and John Quincy Adams. The ordinance, having been initiated by the redemption of these distinguished characters, "large numbers" of the Saints proceeded to undergo baptism in behalf of their deceased relatives.

* Voree *Herald*, August 30, 1849.

CHAPTER VI

The Kingdom Is Established

HARDLY had the work of establishing the true Church of God at Voree been begun when the restless brain of the Prophet began to dream of other fields of conquest. There were solid economic reasons for this, to which we shall shortly direct attention. From the Mormon point of view, however, such reasons would have no weight unless reinforced by the direct command of God. At Elizabeth, on the Monongahela River, in August, 1846, Strang received such a command.* In a vision he beheld "a land amidst wide waters, and covered with large timber, with a deep, broad bay on one side of it." There were hills and rich valleys where the air was pure and serene and the foliage fragrant; and Indians in canoes glided about and caught fish and sat down to eat, and gathered in assemblies where men taught them the ways of truth and holiness. Inquiring the meaning of all this, Strang learned that the land he was beholding should be the seat of God's people, whence the gospel should go out to the red men. The people who taught them would be exalted and would find here a certain refuge from gentile oppression. A stake of Zion was to be established, and a Temple built. And to those who should remove there the riches of forest, earth, and sea were promised in abundance.

All this was but the Mormon way of announcing an important decision of policy. In the survey of economic advantages which the location at Voree held forth to the

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* Revelation of August 25, 1846, in Chronicles of Voree, pp. 114–117. The probable connection between this revelation and the newly imported Order of the Illuminati has already been suggested.

Saints in 1844 one factor of vital importance had been overlooked. The land was already in private possession, and the owners were quite naturally disposed to get all they could for their property. The majority of the Saints who flocked to Voree were too poor to buy these lands, and those who had means were disinclined to devote them to buying property which, under Strang's communistic program, would become the common possession of all. Men of means, therefore, refused, for the most part, to respond to the call to Voree, and the church enterprises there progressed, as we have seen, at snail's pace. Another consideration doubtless had weight with Strang: the gentile population round about Voree never persecuted the Saints, but the Prophet could hardly fail to perceive that he could not hope to build up a populous community there, wholly subservient to his rule, without provoking such hostility as the Saints had formerly encountered in Ohio and Missouri and were even now the objects of in Illinois. Removal to a wilderness region would solve the land problem, and would, at the same time, make possible the development of a theocratic commonwealth free from gentile interference.

The place to which the Saints were miraculously directed was the group of Beaver Islands near the northern end of Lake Michigan. The whole northern half of the lower peninsula of Michigan was then a wilderness, inhabited by only a few hundred Indians and white men. The principal center of the latter was Mackinac Island, of old the center of the trade in fur for almost half a continent. The fur trade had dwindled to insignificance, but Mackinac had found a new and somewhat precarious source of support in the fishing industry of the region adjoining in Lakes Michigan and Huron. For this industry Mackinac afforded at best an illogical capital, having no harbor and being remote from the best fishing grounds; moreover it had no wood supply, then a vital item in the conduct of the shipping trade of the lakes. It had, however, the advantages of entrenched position as a center of trade. Considerable capital was invested in the business houses and other property of the place, all of which would be lost should the trade go to another center. Consequently, as long as a rival was lacking, Mackinac continued to dominate the trade of the surrounding region.

At Big Beaver Island were to be found all the natural advantages as a center of trade which Mackinac lacked. It possessed a seemingly inexhaustible supply of timber, it was on the main steamboat route from Buffalo to Chicago, it was in the very center of the richest fishing grounds of Lake Michigan, and it possessed a splendid, landlocked harbor. Although the Indian title to the land had been extinguished, the government had not yet thrown it open for settlement. Some twenty or thirty Indian families were still living on the island; white occupation was confined to a trading establishment on the north side of the harbor. Its owners were some New York men, who, under the name of the North West Company, were engaged in trading with the Indians and the fishermen of the adjoining region, and who entertained somewhat nebulous schemes for extensive business developments. Chiefly, however, they were cultivating their preëmption right to their location adjoining the harbor, in the expectation that the further settlement of the western country would soon render it valuable.

At the opening of navigation in the spring of 1847 Strang journeyed to the islands with four companions, intent on making a first-hand survey of the situation. During the winter preceding he had been corresponding with John Fisk of Rochester, New York, who was a partner in the trading establishment on Big Beaver, and who, on behalf of his company, cordially welcomed the Mormons to the islands and expressed the desire to coöperate harmoniously with their new neighbors in the further development of the place.* The Prophet's own account of the visit, however, represents the traders as treating them with anything but cordiality.† Had they foreseen the discord that was presently to develop, their reception of the newcomers would have been still more frigid.

So destitute of means were the Saints that they sold their blankets to pay their steamer passage, and on reaching Big Beaver they went ashore with less than two days' supply of provisions and without a cent of money. Building themselves a shelter of hemlock boughs, they began a survey of the island, scantily clad and still more scantily fed.‡ But labor was in demand, and they soon procured in exchange for their toil a supply of provisions and the use of a boat for their further explorations.

The result appeared in the Voree *Herald* two months later§ in the form of a topographical and economic survey of the islands, especial emphasis being placed upon the economic advantages they held out to the Saints who would heed God's call to "gather" there. The report emphasized, too, the opportunity presented of carrying the gospel to the "Lamanites," or Indians. For Prophet Strang, as for the founder of Mormonism, these brothers of a fallen race possessed a peculiar interest, and in all the discussions over the removal to the Beavers the motive of proselyting among the Indians held prominent place. Indeed, the first notice to the Saints of the projected establishment on the Beaver Islands* was headed "Indian Mission" and dealt only with this aspect of the subject, stating that Strang had never lost sight of Joseph Smith's unrealized project of a permanent mission among the Indians and that the "finger of God" had now pointed out the place for such a work. Five months later two reasons were offered for making the "Indian Mission" a place of gathering: first, to give the Indians the arts of civilization; and second, to get lands at such price that a farm could be supplied to every man according to his need, however poor he might be.†

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* Strang MSS, letters of Fisk to Strang, February–April, 1847.

† See Strang, *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac*, p. 22; also Voree *Herald*, January 3, 1850.

‡ One of them recorded that the Prophet took off and mended his only pair of trousers, after which they plunged into the forest. They camped for the night under the stars, without dinner, supper, or fire.

§ Voree *Herald*, July 8, 1847.

The beginning toward entering into the possession of the new "inheritance" was humble enough. It had been expected that a general migration of Saints to the islands would set in in the spring of 1847, and in January the *Herald* announced some general directions for their guidance, and the appointment of seven men to have charge of the enterprise.‡ These men were commended to the Saints abroad as "tried, substantial, and faithful men—servants of the Most High God—in whom the churches may repose the most implicit confidence." They had not yet been tried enough, however, to justify this commendation, for before long over half of them had apostatized and been delivered over to the buffetings of Satan in the flesh.§ The expected migration did not materialize for the present, but in July a handful of Saints assembled at the trading house of the North West Company and began the organization of the local stake.‖ It was resolved at this conference to begin work at once on building a mission house and on Mormonizing and civilizing the Indians.

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* *Ibid.*, October, 1846. The revelation of August 25 was not published until January 14, 1847.

† *Ibid.*, March 11, 1847.

‡ *Ibid.*, January 14, 1847.

§ The seven were U. C. H. Nickerson, Daniel Avery, Ebenezer Page, Benj. C. Ellsworth, Marvin Aldrich, Henry Reynolds, and James M. Adams.

‖ Voree *Herald*, August 19, 1847.

At the conference Ebenezer Page was placed in charge of the local stake until further organization should take place. In all, four families of Saints located on Big Beaver during the season of 1847. Their isolation and privations in this island wilderness during the dreary months of winter when they were completely shut off from all contact with the outside world can more easily be imagined than described. Fortunately the winter proved unusually mild, and with the return of spring glowing reports were sent out to the Saints concerning the situation as they had found it.*

These reports were shortly reinforced by an address from the Prophet himself, penned at the "city of James" on Big Beaver Island, June 26, 1848.† In this address the slow progress made hitherto at the Beavers is explained as due to apostasies in the Church and the spreading abroad of untrue statements about the economic prospects at the islands. In opposition to these misrepresentations the Prophet drew this picture of the situation:

> Here are extensive tracts of land of superior quality ready and waiting to be occupied, covered with valuable timber, which, both in lumber and cordwood finds a ready cash market at high prices. Both soil, climate, and location conspire to make this place a first rate agricultural region. Around the islands are the most extensive and valuable inland fisheries of North America. Business of several kinds is well established here and prospering greatly. Common labor is worth one dollar per day. Mechanical trades are good, especially coopering and boat building. Provisions are abundant and generally at lower prices than in the middle states.

The Indian mission house was reported nearly ready for use, and a school for both white and Indian children was

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* See letters in the Voree *Herald*, April 6 and May 11, 1848.

† *Ibid.*, June 15, 1848 (the paper was not actually issued until July 4).

FONT LAKE, NEAR SAINT JAMES, BEAVER ISLAND

Baptisms for the dead were performed here.

about to be opened. Friendly relations had been established with the red men who were reported to be "a noble and intellectual race of men."

A letter* from Big Beaver written near the close of October, 1848, further sets forth the progress of the new settlement. Thus far the only crop raised was potatoes which had turned out excellently. The land could be cleared for nothing, since there was a steady demand for cordwood, which could be sold at fifty cents a cord. A dock had been built on the west side of the harbor, and another was expected to be built on the south side next season. Sixty lake boats had called during the shipping season, and the number would have been larger but for the uncertainty of obtaining fuel. The writer concluded with a denial of reports of a lack of tillable soil on the island.

The winter of 1848–49 closed down upon twelve families on the desolate island, where four had been a year before. But even this tiny group of Saints, buried in the northern wilderness, could not long subsist in amity. At the beginning of January, Samuel Shaw and Levi Parmeter "broke out in revelations."† Parmeter had a revelation from God appointing Gurdon Brown as Prophet; while Parmeter himself was "the lion to come out of the thicket and destroy the gentiles." Shaw prophesied in the name of God that the Indians were about to "go from house to house in the dead of the night and butcher the people." Only by entering into a covenant, which the two fanatics proceeded to present to the settlers, could this destruction be averted. The presidents of the local stake were not greatly impressed by these revelations, however; they proceeded to bring the new prophets to trial and cut them off from the Church with the usual formula of delivery to the buffetings of Satan. This affair, trivial in its dimensions, is yet of importance as illustrating the state of hysteria which overmuch brooding on the subject of religion seems too prone to develop. A tiny band of Saints had obeyed the call of God, as they believed, to exile themselves in the wilderness. Thrown wholly upon their own resources for society, they spent most of their time, apparently, in religious devotion and disputation.* As in a more noted settlement around Boston Harbor two centuries earlier, they soon began to see spirits. "There are many spirits here, and some very strange ones too," wrote President Aldrich to Prophet Strang, in reporting the affair of Shaw and Parmeter. Puritan Massachusetts hanged her witches in the seventeenth century. Mormon Beaver Island could not hang its rebels in the nineteenth, but the Prophet published to the world this opinion of them: "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Witchcraft is sectarianism. And every rebel organization that ever sprung out of Mormonism is simply that and nothing more."†

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* *Ibid.*, December 7, 1848.

† A full report of the trouble is printed in *ibid.*, April 26, 1849. Brown was one of the two original Mormon settlers on the island, having been a companion of Strang in the first exploration of May, 1847, and a resident from that time. He refused to accept Parmeter's revelation.

The season of 1849 witnessed the first considerable migration of Saints to Big Beaver.‡ Most of them were poor, but a few men of means came. A steam sawmill was begun, a small schooner built, and a beginning was made of constructing a highway into the interior of the island. The number of Mormon families increased fourfold—from twelve to almost fifty. More important developments than these, however, affecting the future of the Mormon establishment, were transpiring at a distance from the Beavers. To the spring conference of 1849 at the city of Saint James* came a number of the leading men of the Church, and from it twelve elders went out on mission with instructions to return with their converts to Beaver the following spring.

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* Of formal religious exercises this order was established: Sunday school at nine o'clock on Sundays; "meeting" at eleven, and also at two o'clock; when the evenings were long enough to make it possible, prayer meetings on Sunday and Thursday evenings.

† Voree *Herald*, April 26, 1849.

‡ See letter of "Greeley" in *ibid.*, January 3, 1850; Strang, *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac*, pp. 23, 24; and reports in Voree *Herald*, February 1, May 17 and 24, 1849.

Meanwhile the busy brain of Prophet Strang was evolving a more aggressive program of action than any which had marked his ministry this far. From numerous sources come indications that the summer of 1849 marked a turning point in the development of the Church. Until then the Prophet had faced an unceasing round of conflict with biting poverty and apostasies still more bitter. Now the tide seemed at last about to turn. The procession of apostasies never ceased, but the menace of poverty gradually lessened and with increasing numbers and wealth the desertion of apostates from time to time was less seriously felt. With affairs thus looking up, as soon as the autumn conferences of 1849 at Voree and Big Beaver were over, the Prophet and George J. Adams set out upon an invasion of the East which was fairly comparable in its significance to the first one undertaken by Strang in the summer of 1846. Their mission lasted through the fall and winter and was principally devoted to the great eastern cities, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington. It had, apparently, a threefold object: to reinforce the work of the elders in "rolling up" recruits for the islands; to improve the standing in general of the Church throughout the East; and to appeal to the authorities at Washington for certain legal concessions with respect to the occupancy of the islands by the Saints.

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* At first the name appears merely as the "city of James"—named, of course, in honor of the Prophet. By the year 1850, however, the prefix was assumed which gave the name the form it still retains. Curiously enough, the harbor of Saint James had been known as "Paradise Bay" long before the Mormons made its shores the site of their sacred city.

If the reports given out by the Prophet be credited,* in all these matters a gratifying measure of success was achieved. Never before had the elders encountered such violent opposition, reported Strang, as did those who went east in the fall of 1849.† Yet all who stood to their task prospered and a "rich harvest" was the result, and all opposition in that section was silenced. At Washington‡ the Prophet was invited to accept free lodgings with one of the "most worthy citizens" and by public officials was treated like the ambassador of a foreign nation. Exactly what he sought from the authorities is somewhat obscure, but enough is in evidence to show that it had chiefly to do with securing free lands for the penniless Saints. The Prophet seems also to have sought, but without success, to have the Beaver Islands withheld from public entry and reserved solely for the Saints. To his followers Strang reported somewhat vaguely that he had enlisted several distinguished men "in favor of a just and free distribution of vacant lands among all the landless, for a perpetual inheritance, according to the principles of the law of God." Daniel Webster was mentioned as fairly committed to this policy; but it seems safe to assume that in the mind of the great statesman and lawyer the "policy" in question was quite a different thing than it was in the minds of the readers of the Voree *Herald*.

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* The actual nature of the eastern mission of 1849–50 will be examined in the succeeding chapter.

† Voree *Herald*, March 28, 1850.

‡ *Ibid.*, January 3 and March 28, 1850.

With the return of the Prophet from his Washington sojourn in the spring of 1850 a curious and significant change became evident in the Strangite organization. The chief outward manifestation of this lay in the removal from Voree to the Beaver Islands. But this change of physical environment was not more marked than the changed attitude of the Saints themselves toward the gentile world that surrounded them. In Ohio, in Missouri, and at Nauvoo, there had been constant friction between the Saints and their gentile neighbors, accompanied by mobbing and even civil war. At Voree, while the Saints quarreled endlessly among themselves, between them and the gentiles round about there was peace and amity. At the Beaver Islands there was almost constant turmoil and discord between Saint and gentile, rising at times to a state of open warfare and culminating at last in the wholesale expulsion of the Saints from the islands. Looking forward for a moment, the Utah Saints played for decades the rôle of Ishmaelites, while the Reorganized Church, with its many thousands of followers, has always lived at peace with its gentile neighbors.

Why has the hand of the gentile been so frequently raised against the Saint, and how are we to account for the two exceptions noted? A complete answer to these questions would necessarily take account of many factors, but it is perfectly easy to suggest the more important ones. The Saints have always protested that they were law-abiding citizens, who desired merely justice at the hands of the authorities. Yet their fundamental attitude toward the government was quite incompatible with good citizenship. While the nation was engaged in the Mexican War, Strang publicly advised his followers to have nothing to do with it. The idea was continually reiterated that the country was a sink of iniquity, upon which the vengeance of God was about to be visited. G. J. Adams, who stood next to Strang in the administration of the Church, publicly prayed for the destruction of the United States:

> This nation is becoming weaker every day and every hour. It is on the very brink of ruin. There is not virtue enough left in the entire country to save it from crumbling into a mass of ruins, and then will come its desolation and final overthrow. O God! Hasten that time that such a cruel, blood-thirsty nation may be blotted out from under heaven, and be no more a people!*

With the very highest officials of the Church giving public expression to sentiments such as these, it is not remarkable if the gentile world attributed to the Saints darker designs than they actually harbored. As long as they were insignificant in numbers, and their membership diffused throughout the general population, public opinion could afford to ignore them. But when, as at Nauvoo and at the Beaver Islands, a large concentration of Saints in a single community took place, a twofold process of irritation became operative; the Saints became a compact political power, and the consciousness of their strength led them to assume an ever more belligerent attitude; viewing which, the gentiles perceived that an interest alien to their own had come into their midst, and that they must make their choice between driving it out, or themselves abandoning the community. In short, wherever the peculiar governmental and social ideas of the Saints found opportunity for expression, the foundation was laid for an irrepressible conflict between them and their gentile neighbors. The Saints were absolutely correct in their recognition of the fact that they could not abide peaceably in the United States. Unfortunately, from the point of view of peace and neighborly concord, none of their several removals—whether to Missouri, to Utah, or to the Beaver Islands, took them outside its boundaries.

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* Voree *Herald*, March 28, 1850.

It should be noted, finally, that at the Beaver Islands, as at Nauvoo and Salt Lake City, the gentile world came to believe that monstrous crimes against morals and liberty alike, were characteristic of the Mormon *régime*. Mormon apologists, when addressing the outside world, strenuously denied the validity of this belief, and confining our remark to the Beaver Islands, we think with justice in the main. But the Mormon leaders were themselves chiefly responsible for its widespread currency. The most damning picture of Mormonism which the limitations of the English language permit one to paint is supplied by the testimony of the leaders of the Church themselves. That this testimony was often false, may readily be granted, yet the Mormons themselves are fairly estopped from pleading such a defense. If the gentiles believed a tissue of falsehood about the lives and practices of the Saints, the Saints themselves supplied the material from which the fabric was woven.

On the eve of the removal from Voree the Prophet *en route* home from the East, penned at Buffalo a moving "testimony to the nation," addressed to the President, Congress, and all the people.* It recited the unrequited wrongs of the Mormons, from the organization of the Church twenty years earlier, and concluded with an appeal to Congress to pass a law authorizing the Saints to "settle upon and forever occupy all the uninhabited lands of the islands in Lake Michigan," and to cease to sell the same to other persons. It also asked that the "martyrdom" of the Saints and their exile from some of the states be publicly condemned, and that measures be taken to redress their wrongs. "The government which cannot or will not prevent such crimes," the document concluded, "does not deserve to continue; and it would be distrusting the justice of the Most High to believe he would not destroy it. As you do good or evil, God reward you."

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* *Ibid.*, June 6, 1850. A copy of the proclamation as originally issued at Buffalo is preserved among the Strang MSS. On June 15, 1850, it was presented as a memorial to the U.S. Senate. It was referred by that body to the Committee on Public Lands, which reported that the government did not own the lands desired by the Saints.

Although this pronouncement was the handiwork of the Prophet it was facilely adopted by the Church, and with its commendation issued to the world. In reality the "testimony to the nation" was a proclamation of defiance, and its issuance at this particular moment augured ill for the peace of the Beaver Islands and the adjoining region. Although Strang continually referred to the islands as an uninhabited land which had been set apart for the Saints by God Himself, others had preceded them into this region. An extensive fishing industry had long flourished in the waters adjoining the islands, and traders were already established on the shores of Paradise Bay. The fishermen were a roistering crew with the free and easy habits of a population which was at once frontier, seafaring, and Irish. Traders and fishermen alike soon perceived in the advent of the newcomers a menace to their own interests and ways of life, and on the Beaver Islands, as in Missouri and elsewhere, as soon as the numbers of the Saints became considerable, hostility developed between the two factions.

In anticipation of his return from the East, Strang had appointed a conference of the Church at Big Beaver, to convene early in July, 1850. It culminated on July 8 in the most remarkable act of the Prophet's surprising career. From the beginning of that career the promise had been held out to his followers that God would reveal to them through his agency hidden mysteries, and would intrust ancient records to him for translation. To Joseph Smith had been revealed the golden plates of the Book of Mormon which he had translated with the aid of the mysterious Urim and Thummim. But it was reserved to Strang to bring forward, if possible, a still more remarkable record. He professed to have received by miraculous intervention certain metallic "plates of Laban,"* on which had been copied at a date prior to the Babylonian captivity a certain scriptural record known as the Book of the Law of the Lord. This record was so important that the Jews had kept it in the Ark of the Covenant itself, and jealously guarded it from profane eyes. Eventually it was lost to the Jews themselves, and hence the Old Testament as it has come down to modern times contains but a traditional and incomplete record even of such vital matters as the Ten Commandments. The Prophet had translated the plates of Laban, and the announcement of their contents, which he was now ready to make known to the world, proved startling enough.† The Kingdom of God was to be reëstablished on earth, and "his servant James" was called to occupy the throne. For the rest, a surprisingly comprehensive framework of theocratic government was set forth, ample in scope to serve the needs of a kingdom of whatever size. To the contents of this book and their consequences as exemplified in the further history of the Strangite organization, we shall have frequent occasion to return. For the present, however, we proceed with the establishment of the Kingdom.

How many of Strang's associates had been acquainted in advance with this impending transformation is not a matter of record. There is no hint of it in the columns of the Voree

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* The story of the plates of Laban is given in the Book of Mormon, I Nephi, chap. i, verses 20–49.

† The Book of the Law of the Lord was published as an eighty-page volume in 1851. For further facts concerning it, see *post*, Appendix I.

Herald, publication of which was continued until June 6, 1850, and it is a perfectly safe presumption that in his numerous conferences with public men at Washington during the winter of 1849–50 Strang said nothing of his fast-ripening project to set up a kingdom within the borders of the United States. But G. J. Adams was cognizant of the plan at least as early as July, 1849,* and from various allusions in the Strang manuscripts it is evident that at least several others were informed of it before the time actually arrived for putting it into execution. On July 8, in the uncompleted tabernacle, the coronation ceremony was carried out.† A portion of the newly revealed Book of the Law of the Lord was read, and the four hundred spectators assembled to witness the setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth, with uplifted hands entered into a solemn covenant henceforth to be God's people and live in accordance with His law as revealed to them by His Prophet in the flesh. The Prophet, clad in a robe of bright red, was escorted to a platform and around him were grouped the apostles, the Quorum or Seventy, and the minor church officials, while the space that remained was occupied by the common people. George J. Adams, who performed with equal facility in the pulpit and on the stage, acted as master of ceremonies. These concluded with placing on the brow of Strang a crown of metal with a cluster of stars in front. On the self-same day the new-made King received a divine revelation appointing "the Islands of the Great Lakes" as an inheritance for the Saints and delegating to the King the power of apportioning the lands among them.* Henceforth forever the return of the day that "James the Prophet was established King" was to be celebrated with sacrifices and thank offerings.† At sunrise the King offered a heifer, while all the men presented a beast or a fowl in like fashion. The victims were slain by the priests, cooked by the deacons, and consumed by the congregation in a great public feast, the several stages in the performance being attended by appropriate declarations of sentiment on the part of the worshipers. In one respect, at least, Strang had demonstrated his ability to prophesy. As a youth of nineteen he had recorded in his diary the making of a great discovery: "That is that I am eager and mankind are frail," followed by the announcement, "I shall act upon it for time to come for my own benefit." Did these words recur to the mind of the red-robed vicegerent of God on earth, sitting with a tinsel crown upon his head, as he gazed into the awe-struck faces of his four hundred credulous worshipers?

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* See his sermon delivered at the "city of James," July 8, 1849, printed in Voree *Herald*, August 16, 1849. For similar pronouncements see *ibid.*, November 15, 1849.

† Warren Post's "Apostolic Testimony," pp. 8–9 and 53–54, gives some important contemporary information concerning this affair. A description of it by an eyewitness, Mrs. Cecelia Hill, given from memory over forty years later, is printed in Legler, *A Moses of the Mormons*, pp. 163–164.

* Book of the Law of the Lord, Preface, p. 8, and first three paragraphs of chap. xx, "The Calling of a King."

† *Ibid.*, chap. xl; for an account of the celebration of July 8, 1852 (in July, 1851, the King and many of his followers were undergoing prosecution in the Federal court at Detroit) see *Northern Islander*, July 8, 1852.

CHAPTER VII

The Saints Become Polygamous

COINCIDENT with the removal from Voree to Beaver Island went another change in the Strangite organization scarcely less astonishing than the creation of the Kingdom. From the early days of Mormonism ugly reports and accusations had been whispered concerning the moral ideals and practices of the Saints. With the defection of Dr. John C. Bennett at Nauvoo and the publication of his sweeping charges of shocking immorality against the leaders of the Church, the whispers swelled to a tumult, and the attention of the gentile world in general was for the first time centered upon this aspect of Mormonism. Although Bennett was himself an unprincipled knave, the further course of events at Nauvoo, culminating in the death of Prophet Smith and the dispersion of the Saints, was such as to leave no room for doubt that the doctrines of spiritual wifery and polygamy were being secretly taught and exemplified by the highest leaders of the Church. Although several years passed before these things were acknowledged, polygamy and the spiritual wife doctrine were ultimately made the corner stone of the Brighamite brand of Mormonism, and today its 500,000 adherents proclaim and devoutly believe that both the doctrine and the practice of polygamy were foisted upon the Church during the lifetime of Smith and by the Prophet himself.

By Prophet Strang, however, these things were vigorously denounced, from the beginning of his career. Against the "abominations" of the Brighamites at Nauvoo he had poured out the vials of God's wrath, and the Saints at

Voree who became infected with spiritual and plural wife leanings were cut off from the Church with unfailing regularity and dispatch. As early as the summer of 1846 a significant illustration of the Prophet's attitude was afforded in connection with the opposition to Bennett's Order of the Illuminati. One of the revolters, Willard Griffith, subsequently authorized a formal retraction of his conduct. In it he stated his conviction that Bennett had not taught polygamy or spiritual wifery, and his belief that the church leaders at Voree were set "like flint" against spiritual wifery in every form.* A few months later, in February, 1847, the editor of the Voree *Herald* published an address to the Saints in which spiritual wifery was described as an "abomination" which was trampled into the dust at Voree as soon as it made its appearance.† In July following, Strang himself printed an editorial with the title "Polygamy not Possible in a Free Government."‡ Although short, it contained a masterly argument in support of the thesis indicated, and closed with a warning to the Brighamite Saints to beware of the pit they were digging for themselves. Two weeks later, John E. Page, then one of the presidents of the Church, printed a signed communication to the Saints devoted wholly to refuting the doctrine of polygamy and to proving that Strang had no responsibility for it; "We have talked hours, yea, even days with President Strang," he stated, "and we find to our utmost satisfaction that he does not believe in or cherish the doctrine of polygamy in any manner, shape, or form imaginable whatever." This article elicited a signed statement from Strang himself in the following issue of the *Herald*.* Confirming the sentiments which Page had attributed to him, he proceeded:

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* Strang MSS, statement of October 23, 1846. Although Griffith declined to sign this statement, its drafting and preservation by Strang is no less conclusive of the Prophet's attitude on the point at issue.

† The editor at this moment was John Greenhow, but it is certain that nothing was published in the *Herald* without the approval of Strang. For the statement, see issue of February 4, 1847.

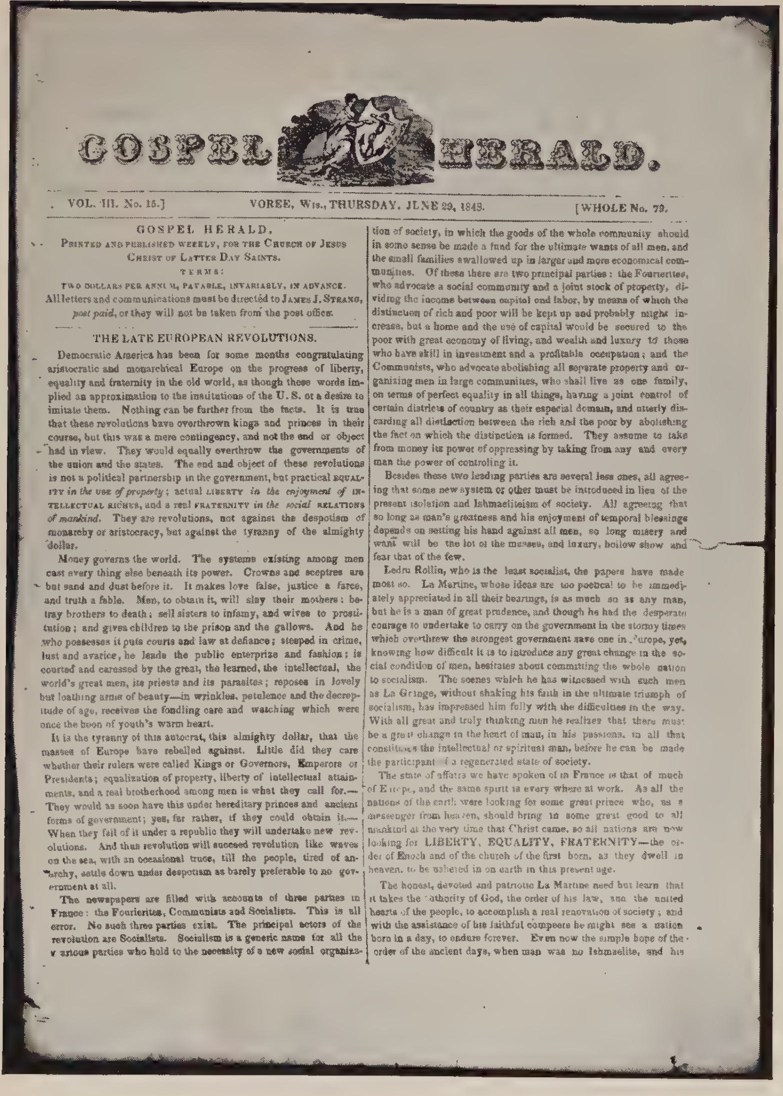
‡ *Ibid.*, July 22, 1847.

> I am only astonished that it should be necessary to state them at all. Within three years I have, in the work of the ministry, traveled over 16,000 miles, visited all the states north of the Carolinas but three, most of them several times—preached to large congregations in all the principal cities and in most of the large branches in the country. And I have uniformly and most distinctly discarded and declared heretical the so-called "spiritual wife system" and everything connected therewith . . . I now say distinctly, and I defy contradiction, that the man or woman does not exist on earth, or under the earth who ever heard me say one word, or saw me do one act, savoring in the least of *spiritual wifery*, or any of the attending abominations. My opinions on this subject are unchanged, and I regard them as unchangeable. They are established on a full consideration of *all* the scriptures, both ancient and modern, and the discipline of the church *shall* conform thereto.

A more emphatic avowal of the Prophet's attitude on the subject than this could not be penned; it continued to express Strang's position at least until September, 1848, for at that time Page, as President of the twelve apostles, addressed a formal order to the Saints to withdraw their fellowship from advocates of polygamy or spiritual wifery, characterizing them as "unfruitful works of darkness, born of hell and begotten of the Devil."†

It is a familiar axiom that the leopard may not change his spots, yet within less than a year from the time the Prophet publicly recorded his "unchanged" and "unchangeable" opposition to polygamy he had himself become a secret practitioner of plural marriage, and the remainder of his life was devoted to the endeavor to foist this relic of primitive society upon the world as an institution di-

* Voree *Herald*, August 12, 1847. † *Ibid.*, September 7, 1848.



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GOSPEL HERALD,

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THE LATE EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS.

Democratic America has been for some months congratulating aristocratic and monarchical Europe on the progress of liberty, equality and fraternity in the old world, as though these words implied an approximation to the institutions of the U. S. or a desire to imitate them. Nothing can be further from the facts. It is true that these revolutions have overthrown kings and princes in their course, but this was a mere contingency, and not the end or object had in view. They would equally overthrow the governments of the union and the states. The end and object of these revolutions is not a political partnership in the government, but practical EQUALITY *in the use of property*; actual LIBERTY *in the enjoyment of* INTELLECTUAL RICHES, and a real FRATERNITY *in the social* RELATIONS *of mankind.* They are revolutions, not against the despotism of monarchy or aristocracy, but against the tyranny of the almighty dollar.

Money governs the world. The systems existing among men cast every thing else beneath its power. Crowns and sceptres are but sand and dust before it. It makes love false, justice a farce, and truth a fable. Men, to obtain it, will slay their mothers; betray brothers to death; sell sisters to infamy, and wives to prostitution; and gives children to the prison and the gallows. And he who possesses it puts courts and law at defiance; steeped in crime, lust and avarice, he leads the public enterprize and fashion; is courted and caressed by the great, the learned, the intellectual, the world's great men, its priests and its parasites; reposes in lovely but loathing arms of beauty—in wrinkles, petulence and the decreptitude of age, receives the fondling care and watching which were once the boon of youth's warm heart.

It is the tyranny of this autocrat, this almighty dollar, that the masses of Europe have rebelled against. Little did they care whether their rulers were called Kings or Governors, Emperors or Presidents; equalization of property, liberty of intellectual attainments, and a real brotherhood among men is what they call for.—They would as soon have this under hereditary princes and ancient forms of government; yes, far rather, if they could obtain it.—When they fail of it under a republic they will undertake new revolutions. And thus revolution will succeed revolution like waves on the sea, with an occasional truce, till the people, tired of anarchy, settle down under despotism as barely preferable to no government at all.

The newspapers are filled with accounts of three parties in France: the Fourierites, Communists and Socialists. This is all error. No such three parties exist. The principal actors of the revolution are Socialists. Socialism is a generic name for all the various parties who hold to the necessity of a new social organization of society, in which the goods of the whole community should in some sense be made a fund for the ultimate wants of all men, and the small families swallowed up in larger and more economical communities. Of these there are two principal parties: the Fourierites, who advocate a social community and a joint stock of property, dividing the income between capital and labor, by means of which the distinction of rich and poor will be kept up and probably might increase, but a home and the use of capital would be secured to the poor with great economy of living, and wealth and luxury to those who have skill in investment and a profitable occupation; and the Communists, who advocate abolishing all separate property and organizing men in large communities, who shall live as one family, on terms of perfect equality in all things, having a joint control of certain districts of country as their especial domain, and utterly discarding all distinction between the rich and the poor by abolishing the fact on which the distinction is formed. They assume to take from money its power of oppressing by taking from any and every man the power of controling it.

Besides these two leading parties are several less ones, all agreeing that some new system or other must be introduced in lieu of the present isolation and Ishmaeliteism of society. All agreeing that so long as man's greatness and his enjoyment of temporal blessings depends on setting his hand against all men, so long misery and want will be the lot of the masses, and luxury, hollow show and fear that of the few.

Ledru Rollin, who is the least socialist, the papers have made most so. La Martine, whose ideas are too poetical to be immediately appreciated in all their bearings, is as much so as any man, but he is a man of great prudence, and though he had the desperate courage to undertake to carry on the government in the stormy times which overthrew the strongest government save one in Europe, yet, knowing how difficult it is to introduce any great change in the social condition of men, hesitates about committing the whole nation to socialism. The scenes which he has witnessed with such men as La Grange, without shaking his faith in the ultimate triumph of socialism, has impressed him fully with the difficulties in the way. With all great and truly thinking men he realizes that there must be a great change in the heart of man, in his passions, in all that constitutes the intellectual or spiritual man, before he can be made the participant of a regenerated state of society.

The state of affairs we have spoken of in France is that of much of Europe, and the same spirit is every where at work. As all the nations of the earth were looking for some great prince who, as a messenger from heaven, should bring in some great good to all mankind at the very time that Christ came, so all nations are now looking for LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY—the order of Enoch and of the church of the first born, as they dwell in heaven, to be ushered in on earth in this present age.

The honest, devoted and patriotic La Martine need but learn that it takes the authority of God, the order of his law, and the united hearts of the people, to accomplish a real renovation of society; and with the assistance of his faithful compeers he might see a nation born in a day, to endure forever. Even now the simple hope of the order of the ancient days, when man was no Ishmaelite, and his

AN ISSUE OF THE VOREE *HERALD*

vinely ordained. How are we to account for this surprising reversal, from which were to proceed consequences of momentous importance not only to the Strangite community but to the entire future development of Mormonism? A son of the Prophet has advanced the theory* that the change was made when Strang became convinced that Joseph Smith, before his death, had become a proponent of polygamy. To the author this explanation is not convincing. The facts concerning Joseph Smith and conditions at Nauvoo were as accessible to Strang at the beginning of his prophetic career as they were at any later time, and there is in existence the best of documentary authority for the belief that Strang was by no means ignorant of Joseph Smith's doings.† Strang was a man of erratic brilliancy, and the surmise seems reasonable that his head was turned by his success in gathering and dominating over his followers, so that he came to believe he could do anything he chose with them. But it may be asked why he should choose to do this thing, which ran counter to his entire career hitherto. One answer has already been suggested. Another may lie in the fact that Strang was a man of powerful sexual impulses‡ and that he had made the acquaintance of a clever and charming young woman whom he, being long since married, could possess only through the avenue of polygamy.

Returning from the realm of surmise to that of demonstrable fact, let us take note of a performance of Strang in connection with his eastern mission of 1849 which is difficult to reconcile with the accepted standards either of common morality or of common sense. On July 8, 1830, about the same time as the birth of the Mormon Church, Elvira Eliza Field was born at Streetsborough, Ohio.* Her parents became converts to Mormonism and joined the Church at Kirtland. In 1844 they removed to Michigan, and here the girl blossomed into a charming womanhood. For two years she lived with an uncle in Washtenaw County, by the name of Israel Smith, and at the age of sixteen she began teaching school. She taught at Eaton Rapids in 1847 and near Charlotte the following year. When Strang's prophetic claims came to the attention of Elvira's parents they accepted them. Elvira likewise became a devotee of Strang, whom as yet she had never seen, and planned to attend the approaching conference of the Church at Voree in April, 1848. "If you want a good school mistress," wrote Samuel Graham to the Prophet, "she has the name. She wants to join the associated order of Enick [Enoch]."†

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* In conversation with the author.

† For example, in June, 1846, George J. Adams wrote Strang that "if he [Joseph] had taken my council and laid aside the cursed *Spiritual Wife doctrine* the Military Spirit, the *presidential Campaign* and Several other operations (that I will tel you when I See you) he would have been a liveing Man until this day." Strang MSS, letter of Adams to Strang, June 20, 1846.

‡ This was stated to me by Wingfield Watson, a devout adherent of Strang, who reported it on the authority of an oral statement of the Prophet in his hearing.

But destiny had in store for Elvira a far different rôle than that of schoolmistress to the children of the Saints. Presumably she came to the April conference, and there for the first time encountered the Prophet in the flesh. Certain it is that a few months after this the Prophet communicated to her, through the agency of George J. Adams, as strange a proposal as ever came in sober earnest from the lips of mortal man. The Prophet, he said, had received from God, by an angelic messenger, a holy and priceless record, containing the law of God for the governance of his people in his Kingdom, which was shortly to be established on earth. The new revelation required the Saints, among other things, to institute a polygamous organization of society; Prophet Strang, as King and vicegerent of God on earth, would himself set the example for his followers; and Adams had come, like another John the Baptist, to offer to Elvira Field the unique distinction of becoming his first plural wife, and his queen in the Kingdom soon to be established. But since conditions were not yet ripe for the public annunciation of this program, the union was to be kept secret for the present, even from the girl's own parents.

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* The facts concerning her are taken from a memorial booklet, prepared and published by her son, Charles J. Strang, after her death in 1910.

† Strang MSS, letter of Samuel Graham to Strang, Leroy, Michigan, January 13, 1848.

It affords a striking example of the limits of human credulity that Elvira accepted this offer in all sincerity, and vanishing from the ken of parents and loved ones, blindly staked her entire future upon her faith in the Prophet and in his lecherous Prime Minister, George J. Adams. On July 13, 1849, a few days after the close of the church conference at Beaver Island, she was married to Strang, on the eve of his departure for the East.* The young bride's hair was shorn, and clad in masculine garments she accompanied her husband upon his mission, posing as his nephew and private secretary under the alias of "Charles J. Douglass." So effective was her concealment of her movements from her family that more than six months after the marriage her distracted brother was still traveling over

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* The date is given on the authority of Charles J. Strang, the eldest offspring of the union. Where the marriage was celebrated, or how, we have no information. The element of secrecy aside, there could be no legal marriage between the couple, a fact which no one knew better than Strang. In the course of an editorial controversy several years later he stated that besides his lawful wife he was living with two other women, whom he supported and who bore him children, and "whom I would marry if the law permitted me." *Northern Islander*, October 11, 1855. The women alluded to were obviously Elvira Field and Betsy McNutt, his first and second plural wives, and the statement quoted discloses that Strang made no pretense to himself that they were married to him in any legal sense.

Michigan vainly seeking some clue to her whereabouts and fate.*

But the secret, if kept from Elvira's parents, was shared by certain of the Saints who stood high in the Prophet's confidence, and it was of such a character that it could not be wholly confined to this select circle. Even at the July conference on Big Beaver, there had been gossiping among the Saints, which the Prophet, as usual, had sternly repressed. After his departure from the island, the gossip was renewed, and by the time Strang reached New York it had developed to dangerous dimensions. Its chief fomenter was Mrs. Lorenzo D. Hickey. Apparently she lacked positive knowledge as to what was transpiring, but there were indications of scandalous doings at the island amply sufficient to give exercise to her tongue, and Saints do not differ from gentiles in the propensity to give ear and circulation to stories of scandalous conduct.

Not only did Mrs. Hickey talk to her neighbors on Beaver Island, but of more immediate import to our story, she wrote letters to her husband, who was absent in the East. In the high tide of the Prophet's meetings in New York City, Hickey and Increase Van Deusen precipitated a disgraceful uproar. Hickey charged the Prophet with adultery, fornication, spiritual wifery, "and all the abominations that were ever practiced at Nauvoo," and professed to have letters from Beaver Island which would support these charges. Van Deusen, screaming like a madman, so grossly insulted Strang, both by words and by physical manifestations, that a negro Saint who was present testified that although it was not expected of "persons of color" that they should behave with equal decorum with white men, he had never known a colored man to behave in so shameful a manner, or to employ language so abusive and insinuating.* Although Strang was temporarily driven from the meeting by the fanatics,† he the next day denied the truth of the charges and asked for an investigation, the result of which was the excommunication of Van Deusen from the Church and the suspension of Hickey "for most gross lying and slander" upon Strang and others.

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* Strang MSS, statements, among others, in letters of James M. Greig to Strang, November 16, 1849; A. J. Graham to Strang, January 22, 1850; and C. J. Douglass to Strang, February 4, 1850.

There can be but little doubt that both Hickey and Van Deusen were so unbalanced as to be practically insane. According to George J. Adams they were possessed of devils. He cast them out of Hickey, and bound them up so tight in Van Deusen that he could not speak, but "trembled like a reed shaken in the wind."‡ It is certain that the gossip conveyed to Hickey by his wife did not include any knowledge of the real identity of "Charley Douglass," else he would have pointed to her, present in the meeting, as affording conclusive material evidence of his charges against the Prophet. He shortly humbly confessed his fault, was restored to the good graces of the Saints, became himself an ardent polygamist, and died forty years later, a zealous advocate of the claims of Strangite Mormonism.

Although Strang had successfully browbeaten his accusers at New York, at Philadelphia and Baltimore the tongue of scandal wagged anew over the identity of his private secretary. In truth, it passes ordinary comprehension how Elvira could have been expected to play successfully, for months together, her difficult rôle of Charles J. Douglass, nephew and private secretary of the Prophet, without provoking suspicion and scandal. At any rate she did not, for within the circle of the Saints themselves her "physiological" peculiarities began to be discussed in a manner that can hardly be presented in print. The Prophet's attitude in the face of this scandal is instructive to observe. The absolute truth of the story in circulation he, of course, knew better than anyone else; he knew, too, that the knowledge of "Charley's" identity was shared by a number of his chief satellites in the faith. Yet he assumed an air of honest indignation, and boldly demanded that those Saints responsible for the story present proof that "Charley" was a girl, and gravely descanted upon their iniquity in presenting his conduct to the world in an infamous light.* Of course they could present no absolute proof of their suspicion, and equally of course Strang (had it been unfounded) could have silenced the gossip with perfect ease by procuring from any reputable physician a certificate establishing beyond cavil "Charley's" sex identity. Not daring to resort to such a measure, however, nor willing to confess the fraud he was practicing, he strove to silence his accusers by a show of anger and wounded dignity. To such a strait was the vicegerent of God on earth reduced, and to such a depth of ignominy did the young bride who had been "honored" by being selected as the first to exemplify the divine institution of polygamy, find herself exposed.

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* A report of the testimony taken upon the trial of Van Deusen and Hickey for their conduct, is preserved among the Strang MSS. Substantially the same information is published in the Voree *Herald*, November 15 and 22, 1849.

† Van Deusen had made his peace with the Strangite organization only at the July, 1849, conference. Prior to this, he had for two years been engaged in selling a publication he had gotten out which professed to expose the secrets and sins of Mormonism. Letter of Van Deusen to Strang, June 18, 1849, in Strang MSS.

‡ Report in Voree *Herald*, December 27, 1849.

It is pertinent to inquire at this point concerning the attitude of Mary Perce, Strang's legal wife, with respect to the institution of polygamy. It has commonly been asserted that upon learning of her husband's advocacy of the institution, and of his exemplification of it with Elvira Field, she indignantly left him and went to live with her own relatives.* Precisely when Mary was informed of her husband's union with Elvira seems impossible to determine, but it is clear, from various allusions in the Strang manuscripts and elsewhere that the statement noted is untrue. Mrs. Strang went east either with or shortly following her husband, and spent at least a portion of the winter with his relatives in western New York. In an affectionate letter to her on January 25, 1850, Strang alludes to "Charley's" presence with him, and it does not seem probable, however it may have been with others, that Mrs. Strang could have been deceived by her husband's invention of a sixteen-year-old "nephew." Regardless of this point, there was no secrecy about Strang's relations with Elvira from the time of the public unmasking of polygamy in July, 1850, yet Mary continued to live with him for many months thereafter, and in April, 1851, he made her a member of his Council. The following month Mary left the island and from subsequent correspondence between the Prophet and Samuel Graham, who had succeeded to the place in his councils vacated by George J. Adams, it appears that Strang himself commanded her to depart, having been led to believe that she was stirring up opposition to his policies.† Probably this departure marks the date of the final separation between the two, although as late as October 11, 1855, Strang asserted in the *Islander* that Mary had not separated from him, but was spending her summers at Voree looking after his business interests there, while she spent the winters with him at the state capital or on Beaver Island.

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* Numerous letters preserved in the Strang MSS deal with this scandal.

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* Substantially this statement has been made by the present writer in the article "Polygamy at Beaver Island," in *Michigan History Magazine*, V, 333 ff. This article was published before the Strang MSS had been found, and the modified statement now presented is based upon certain letters found among them.

† Letters of Samuel Graham to Strang, July 20, 1850, and July 8 and 10, 1851.

The subject of polygamy and spiritual wifery affords as good a test as any of the sincerity and the prophetic pretensions of Strang. Either God approves of these things or he does not; and Strang's prophetic pretensions were either valid or the opposite. If the Book of the Law of the Lord, which justifies polygamy, was in fact God's law, written down on metallic plates prior to the Babylonian captivity, God must have been cognizant of it all along; and we face the puzzling fact that for half a dozen years prior to 1850 God kept his earthly vicegerent in ignorance of this law, the while the Prophet in his name cast numbers of men and women out of the Church and into the torments of hell not for breaking, but for attempting to live up to this divine precept. But leaving God out of the question we find the man who, in 1847, held "unchangeable" opinions against polygamy, founded "on a full consideration of *all* the scriptures, both ancient and modern," a few years later vigorously contending that the practice offers the sole hope for the elevation of the race, and proving its divine character from both the New and the Old Testament alike.*

Those of Strang's followers who assented to the establishment of the Kingdom seem not to have objected to the polygamous dispensation. When it came, however, to the point of personally exemplifying it, their response was not very enthusiastic. There were never more than eighteen or twenty polygamous families at the Beaver Islands.† The Prophet had four wives (in addition to his first) and L. D. Hickey had three. All the other polygamous families contained but two wives. At the time of the dispersion in 1856 the Mormon population of the islands and the adjoining mainland was in excess of 2,500, and it seems reasonable to estimate that there were at least 500 heads of families. It follows that in only about one family in twenty-five did plural marriage prevail. The causes of this limited response to the Prophet's teaching seem reasonably evident. Probably simple poverty, coupled with a scarcity of eligible females, were the chief factors in the premises. The Saints were highly industrious, but they had scant store of accumulated capital and they were engaged in the task, old in American history, of hewing homes out of the wilderness. Aside from the causes noted, the shortness of time permitted Strang's Kingdom to exist naturally operated to hinder any widespread development of polygamy. There is no room to doubt that the community believed thoroughly Strang's teaching; and its sentiment was such that young women deemed it an honor to be considered eligible to become plural wives of the Prophet.

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* Strang's secret support of polygamy began in 1849, and his open advocacy of it dates from the establishment of the Kingdom with the Book of the Law of the Lord as its corner stone in July, 1850. For extensive arguments by Strang justifying polygamy, see the *Northern Islander*, June 14, 1855, and Book of the Law of the Lord, pp. 318–328.

† Statement of Wingfield Watson to the author. Watson, as a young married man, lived on the island from 1852 until the dispersion in 1856.

As Prophet Strang was by far the most notable exemplar of polygamy in his Kingdom, particular attention may be accorded his marital career, concerning which more fiction has been put afloat than about any other aspect of Strangite Mormonism. It has been stated, among other things, that he provided different houses for his several wives. A letter received from Strang's last surviving widow* a few years before her death sheds light on this and other points pertaining to the Prophet's household:

> You ask if we all lived in the same house—we did but had separate rooms—and all met in prayer and ate at the same table—he [Strang] was a very mild-spoken, kind man to his family,

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* Mrs. Sarah A. Wing of Springville, Utah. The author interviewed her in the summer of 1920, and for a considerable period corresponded with her.

> although his word was law—we were all honest in our religion and made things as pleasant as possible—there were four of us living in one house.

This testimony from one who had long lost all motive or desire to shield the Prophet or his established order, affords a rather pleasant picture of the practical operation of polygamy, contrasting sharply with some of the fiction which has been written about Beaver Island Mormonism. Human nature is a variable quality, however, and there are reasons for supposing that Strang's own household exemplified polygamy at its best. That all the polygamous husbands were judicious and mild, or that all the wives were free from personal jealousies and were loyal to the teachings of their religion, it would be hazardous to affirm. In another respect, also, the testimony of Strang's widow contrasts sharply with popular tradition and recent fiction: she was not harried into marriage; rather, she married the Prophet in opposition to the wish of her father (one of the twelve apostles). When she told him of her intention to marry Strang, he answered that he would almost as soon see her buried as married in polygamy. "But I took the chance," she relates. "I thought he was the Lord's chosen Prophet and all would be right." Strong indeed must have been the religious and social urge which would impel a beautiful and clever girl of seventeen to become, in opposition to her father's judgment and wish, the fourth wife of a man of forty-two years of age.

Strang's first wife, Mary Perce, whom he married in western New York in 1836, bore him four children. The eldest of these, a daughter named Mary, died in babyhood. A son, named William J. Strang, spent his life as a railroad man, rising to the position of conductor and living for many years at Terre Haute, Indiana. With him his mother and her second daughter, Myraette Strang, made their home. The latter, who was a teacher, remained unmarried. It has been more than once stated that when Strang was shot he ignored his plural wives, expressing a desire to be reconciled to Mary; and that on being carried to Voree she attended him until his death. However, contemporary evidence refutes this story, which can only be regarded as a bit of amiable fiction.

Strang married Elvira Field, his first polygamous wife, on July 13, 1849. Two and one-half years later, on January 19, 1852, he took to wife Betsy McNutt. In the summer of 1855 he contracted his final marriage alliances with Sarah and Phoebe Wright. The two latest brides were cousins, aged respectively seventeen and eighteen years. Zenas Wright (brother of Sarah and cousin of Phoebe) has informed me that the ceremony was a double one, both girls being married on the same day. Mrs. Wing (formerly Sarah Wright) pronounces this incorrect: "There was some rumor," she adds, "that we were married at the same time, but there was a few months' difference." Why this rumor should have arisen remains unexplained. Charles J. Strang, deriving his information from his mother, Elvira Field, records the date of his father's marriage to Sarah Wright as July 15, 1855; and to Phoebe, as occurring on October 27.* In the absence of other or more conclusive information we are constrained to accept these dates as correct.

The Prophet was shot in June, 1856, dying on July 9. Thus, he lived with Elvira Field seven years, with Betsy McNutt four and one-half, with Sarah Wright almost a year, and with Phoebe Wright about eight months. Children were born to him posthumously by all these women. In all Elvira Field bore the Prophet four children, Betsy McNutt four, and Sarah and Phoebe Wright one each. The essential facts concerning the careers of all these children are known to the author. Several of them are still living, and from two of these much valuable information has been received. They are cultured, high-minded citizens, have never shared their father's religious faith, and are averse to having any notoriety imposed upon them in connection therewith. It would ill requite their kindness to the author if he should disappoint this desire by inflicting unwelcome publicity upon them. For this reason, while presenting data concerning the members of Strang's family now dead, those still living will be left to the obscurity from public gaze which they covet.

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* Strang MSS, Strang family record, compiled by Charles J. Strang. Phoebe Wright's daughter, in a recent letter to the writer confirms, on the authority of her mother, this statement of Mrs. Wing concerning the separate marriage dates. She states that the association of her own birthday (October 28) with the date of marriage of her mother (October 27) has enabled her to remember what her mother always told her on the subject.

With the shooting of Strang and the mobbing of his followers in the summer of 1856 the members of his numerous family were scattered far and wide, never, in many cases, to meet again on earth. Only by a strong effort can the imagination visualize the deplorable plight of his polygamous wives, deprived of their protector, plundered of their property, the religious community which sheltered them blotted out, two of them with little, and all with unborn, children to care for—thus were they suddenly cast forth as wanderers in a cold and unsympathetic world. Not more pathetic, certainly, was the plight of the exiled Acadians than that of these forlorn women. Face to face with grim necessity they all made shift to exist, however, and all succeeded in rearing their families, respectably if not in comfort.

Of Elvira Field it is recorded* that she lived as a widow at Voree until 1860, when she returned to her girlhood home in Eaton County, Michigan. She had a desperate struggle to maintain herself and children, and in the year noted, believing herself fatally ill, she gave them to the care of friends. Recovering, in 1864 she took back all but the youngest, who had been adopted by David Grier and whose name had been changed to Charles J. Grier. In 1865 she married a widower, John Baker, and bore him two children. From 1873 until old age she lived in Lake County, Michigan; she died at Courtland in 1910. Her eldest son, Charles J. Strang, who died about a decade later, was for many years a printer, residing at Lansing. Although more than once importuned to assume his father's prophetic mantle, he always resisted the appeal and held aloof from his father's followers.

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* Memorial booklet published by Charles J. Strang.

Betsy McNutt was an "old maid," thirty-one years of age, when she attained the earthly glory of handmaiden to a prophet in the flesh. Concerning this match Wingfield Watson has related* that Betsy, who was present at a social gathering at Saint James, was being teased about her single state. She responded to her tormentors that there was only one man on the island she would think of marrying. It became evident that she had in mind the Prophet, and someone carried the story to him; whereupon, out of a sense of supposed gallantry he offered himself to her in marriage. Mr. Watson intimated that Betsy was not noted for her beauty, and further, that the Prophet was none too keen in driving a matrimonial bargain. However the case may have been with respect to Betsy, this remark seems out of place when applied to the four other wives he selected. Betsy never remarried after Strang's death. A few years after the dispersion at Beaver Island she made her way to the woods of Jackson County, Wisconsin, whither a considerable number of Strang's followers had preceded her, and by picking berries and other shifts managed to eke out an existence for herself and children. When Evangeline, her eldest child, married John Denio of Lamoni, Iowa, Betsy went there to live; there she became a Reorganized Saint, and there died. Abigail, her youngest child and one of the Prophet's posthumous children, passed her later years at St. Joseph, Missouri, a member of the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints, where she died in the month of May, 1921.

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* In interview with the author.

Sarah and Phoebe Wright, girl wives of Strang's last year on earth, found their way, like Betsy McNutt, to the wilds of Jackson County, Wisconsin. To Phoebe was born in October, 1856, a daughter, Eugenia (the "Princess Eugenia" of A. N. Somers' narrative "An American King" in the *National Magazine* for May, 1901), who grew to womanhood in Jackson County and there became the wife of a banker of Black River Falls. She is still living (1929) in another state. Her mother, Phoebe Wright, made her home with her until her death, November 9, 1914; she never remarried after the death of the Prophet.

Sarah Wright followed her parents to Racine, Wisconsin, upon the dispersion at Beaver Island. A few miles away, at Voree, her husband lay dying, but, destitute, she was unable to be with him in his last days. She soon went with her parents to Jackson County, Wisconsin, where in November, 1856, her child, James J. Strang, was born. She here married a Saint, Doctor Wing, and removed with him to Utah, where under his tutelage she learned the medical art. Doctor Wing developed polygamous inclinations, which Sarah had renounced after the death of Strang. Accordingly a separation ensued, and Mrs. Wing for many years successfully practiced medicine at her home in Springville. Here on the shore of Utah Lake, beneath the towering peaks of the Wasatch Range, she passed her later years, in an environment as different from that of the Beaver Islands as the mind can readily conceive. The author interviewed her here in the summer of 1920, a few years before her death.

It is a striking commentary upon the futility of human aspirations and strivings that of all Strang's numerous family, not a single member remained loyal to his religious teachings and pretensions. Of his wives, two at least—Elvira Field and Sarah Wright—possessed more than ordinary capacity and talent. Both renounced Mormonism altogether, and Sarah even reared her son in ignorance of the very name of his father.* Betsy McNutt went over to the Reorganized Church, but before her death had become an adherent of still another of the "isms" which have afflicted the Saints since the demise of Joseph Smith.

It remains to set forth the results for the future of Mormonism of that dramatic proclamation of the Kingdom of God beside the pleasant harbor of Saint James on July 8, 1850. The new development, with its embracement of plural marriage, proved too much for some of the Saints who had followed Strang's teachings hitherto, and out of their revolt proceeded consequences of far-reaching importance. At Zarahemla (near modern Blanchardville), Wisconsin, was a Mormon stake which had been organized but a short time before by Zenas H. Gurley, who had been for several years a zealous advocate of the Strangite faith. Living in the same community was Henry H. Deam, another follower of Strang, while at Beloit lived Jason W. Briggs, one of the most active of Strangite ministers. These men repudiated the doctrine of polygamy, and they were largely instru-

* Statement in letter of Mrs. Wing to the author.

mental in establishing the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints.* Their first measure, taken under Deam's leadership, was to publish in the Mineral Point *Tribune* a protest against polygamy "and other abominations" practiced by Strang and his followers, and an announcement of their secession from them.† Gurley, who had founded the local stake, was absent from home when this notice was published. On returning he asked the signers what they proposed to do next. The answer was they did not know; they believed the first principles of the gospel he had taught them, but they refused to accept polygamy and its attendant doctrines as taught by Strang and others. In their dilemma it was resolved to "seek to the Lord for wisdom" on the question who was the true head of the Church. They were answered repeatedly "through gifts of tongues, prophecy, and vision" that all pretenders to the prophetic office were impostors, and in due time "young Joseph" Smith would be called to the office, of which he was the rightful heir. During the next two or three years the Reorganized Church was established, with the usual accompaniment of visions, revelations, and angelic visitations, on the twin corner stones of monogamy and the leadership of young Joseph Smith. Today this church numbers 100,000 adherents and is a vigorous rival of the Utah or Brighamite faction of Mormonism. It claims to be the true Church of Latter Day Saints, and on at least one occasion, wherein the issue of title to church property was involved, has enjoyed the satisfaction of having this claim formally validated by a decision of the United States Court.

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* See Joseph Smith and Heman C. Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1805–1890*, Vol. III, biographies of Deam, Briggs, and Gurley in chap. 38.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 735, 745–746. The protest was as follows: "To whom it May Concern: This is to certify that we, the undersigned, who are members of the Yellowstone branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, do hereby protest against the practice of polygamy and other abominations that are practiced by James J. Strang and his followers; and withdraw our fellowship from them, and from all the so-called pretenders to the successorship or presidency of the church; among whom are the said James J. Strang. Brigham Young, William B. Smith, Colin Brewster, Alpheus Cutler, Lyman Wight, and others; and hold ourselves aloof from them and do not wish to be responsible for any of their evil teachings or practices."

CHAPTER VIII

Mormon Misdeeds and Gentile Persecution

IN an earlier chapter we have noted the fact that while at Voree Strang's followers lived in peace and harmony with their gentile neighbors, the years of the Kingdom at Beaver Island were characterized by one prolonged period of turmoil and discord. Difficulties began with almost the first appearance of the Saints on the island, although for one or two seasons the Mormons, insignificant in numbers, bore the aggressions of the fishermen with comparative meekness. The first season there was no post office on the island, but one was shortly established at the store of the gentile trader on Whiskey Point.* The fishermen who made this their rendezvous, and whose habits are doubtless responsible for the name attached to the place, adopted the somewhat trying practice of abusing and beating up Mormons who visited the Point to inquire for mail.† In 1848 the public lands were thrown on the market. In accordance with a practice general on the frontier, individuals had made squatter claims, and had begun to make improvements before the land was opened for entry. The fishermen learned of the approaching land sale in advance of the Mormons and proceeded to take advantage of their knowledge by marking out the most desirable tracts of land. It was then proposed that at the sale all should respect these squatter claims, whether occupied or not, and no one should buy in the land to which another had laid claim. The Mormons respected this agreement; but two of the fishermen, Thomas and Samuel Bennett, proceeded to enter several lots on which Mormons had located and built their homes, and the latter saw themselves deprived of their property. By this initial act of aggression the Bennetts laid the groundwork for a quarrel of large dimensions, eventuating finally in a tragedy which we shall shortly have occasion to notice.

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* Whiskey Point lay across the harbor from the Mormon settlement, where today the lighthouse and life-saving station are located.

† The principal source of information for these events is Strang's narrative, *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac*. Although a partisan document, it can be relied upon as presenting the Mormon point of view of the events described. It is not improbable, however, that Strang's sense of the dramatic led him to improve the narration by drawing upon his imagination for certain of its details.

The first considerable migration of Saints to the islands began in 1849, and therewith rascally steamboat captains began the practice of opposing settlement here by persuading their passengers to go on to Wisconsin or other points. When persuasion failed, they sometimes resorted to open breach of contract, refusing on one pretext or another to land passengers who had bought tickets for the islands. In one instance over fifty emigrants from Otsego County, New York, had taken passage on the *Empire State* under especial agreement to land them at Big Beaver. The boat passed the island in the daytime, running closely along beside it, but the captain refused to land his passengers. During the winter of 1849–50 a party from Whiskey Point descended upon a group of Saints who were getting out timber for the Temple. They drove the men from their work, severely beating one of them who refused to heed their commands. Others visited the lyceum which the Mormons started that winter, and by "rude and filthy" conduct broke it up; while still others called at the Mormon homes in the absence of the men and insulted and terrorized the women and children.

Matters came to a crisis with the summer of 1850, when the Prophet and the principal leaders of the Church, accompanied by a large number of followers, moved up to occupy the land God had set apart for them. The Mormons now abandoned their nonresistant attitude. They let it be known that violence would meet with proper resentment, and rowdies who sought to disturb their meetings found themselves thrown out with resolution and dispatch. The Prophet himself went to a fisherman's home, with a bodyguard of Mormons armed with clubs, and seized a cow, the ownership of which was disputed, overawing by this show of force a group of Irishmen who gathered with shilalas to beat him up and rescue the cow.

Temporarily, at least, the day of beating Mormons on Beaver Island was over, and from their despised estate of previous seasons the Saints now found themselves in the ascendant. The fishermen, on their side, were spurred to new violence by this situation and by the spectacle of the increasing tide of Mormon immigration. The invitation was sent out to all the fishing grounds to gather at Whiskey Point in readiness for the Fourth of July, and the climax of the celebration of national independence was to be the expulsion of the Mormons from the island. Aid was enlisted also from Mackinac, and several small vessels from there were engaged to bring supplies, liquid and martial, to the Point and be on hand for the fray. To keep such a design secret was impossible, particularly from so shrewd and enterprising an opponent as Strang. The latter had reasons of his own for calling in his followers from far and wide, and accordingly notice had been sent out for a church conference at Saint James in early July. The men were organized as a guard, drills were held, and arms and ammunition procured. The latter even included a cannon, while to offset the gentile navy a schooner, procured from Chicago, was anchored in the harbor and in the nighttime secretly manned with a force of armed men.

In the night of July 3, while the fishermen were carousing on Whiskey Point, a few men from the Mormon camp went among them as spies and learned their numbers and plans; they also dumped some powder into the Lake, and doped a barrel of whiskey with tobacco, which rendered those who used it excessively drunk. The gentile plan was to attend the Mormon meeting, armed with concealed weapons, and at the proper moment start a disturbance, and overpower or kill the Mormon men; after which the women and property of the Saints would be at their mercy.

Their disillusionment began at daybreak, when the Mormons began firing a salute with their cannon, affording to the fishermen their first inkling of the presence of such a weapon; their interest mounted when the cannon balls from across the harbor began skipping past Whiskey Point unpleasantly close to the trading house where they had gathered, and they perceived that the artillerymen were getting the range of the buildings there. Before their interest had time to cool, a delegation of Saints called upon McKinley, the trader,* to notify him they would hold him responsible for any damage done by the mob he was harboring, and that the first sign of an attack would be the signal for destroying his establishment. In readiness for such an attack the Saints garrisoned their tabernacle, and in front the artillerymen waited, with the cannon unlimbered and a fire wherein a supply of heated balls was in readiness for instant use. The fishermen had no stomach for such a contest as impended, and after finishing their carouse went their several ways, resolving "to pay off the damned Mormons" on a more propitious occasion.*

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* Peter McKinley from Ohio had bought Cable's trading house at the Point. One writer states that he was a cousin of William McKinley, later President of the United States.

Hardly had the fishermen been routed and the coronation festivities concluded at Saint James when the Prophet became involved in a dispute of far-reaching consequences with his own Prime Minister, George J. Adams. For four years Adams had been, next to the Prophet himself, the most conspicuous figure in the Strangite organization. Much of his time had been devoted to proselyting work in the East, and from his various centers of activity he had sent back to the Prophet a flood of reports of great successes won, yet his character was such that, although he enjoyed the confidence of the Prophet, in the eyes of many other Saints his support was of more than doubtful value to the Church. In the winter of 1849 the *Advent Herald* of Boston made an attack upon Adams, stating among other things that he had been excommunicated by Joseph Smith for an unnamable offense.† About this time Strang received a revelation promising that if Adams would reside near him and assist him in presiding over the Church the Lord would "make him a host, and the head of nations."‡ Defending Adams against the *Advent Herald*, therefore, Strang argued that his moral lapse was no worse than that of Judah, while his acting was no lewder than the spectacle of "King David dancing naked before the maids of Israel." In any event, it was God who had called Adams, and Strang, his mouthpiece, had no responsibility in the matter.

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* Minutes of addresses by Strang and others at the conference preceding the coronation ceremony, preserved among the Strang MSS, show that the Saints were fearful of an attack by a gentile mob. Strang and George J. Adams were outspoken in their defiance of the gentiles. Strang affirmed that he would with his own hand execute the death sentence upon the mobbers, while Adams called not merely for their defeat, but for a generous letting of gentile blood.

† Voree *Herald*, February 22, 1849.

‡ Revelation of January 7, 1849.

Before many months, however, Adams was to outrage decency in a fashion which could not be thus complacently overlooked. While preaching to "vast throngs" at Boston in the winter of 1849–50,* he became acquainted with a woman of "indifferent fame" whom he took to Baltimore and there introduced to his associates as a wealthy widow from Charleston, South Carolina.† On returning to Beaver Island in the spring of 1850, Adams brought this woman with him in the rôle of Mrs. Adams, giving out that his former wife, who was in an advanced state of consumption, had died. It presently transpired, however, that the real Mrs. Adams was still living in New Jersey, where her husband had abandoned her. For this offense against decency and humanity, the Prophet subjected Adams to discipline, depriving him of his authority as a member of the First Presidency of the Church.‡

Enraged over his humiliation, Adams proceeded to Mackinac and there joined forces with the gentile element whose slaughter he had been demanding only three months earlier. On October 20 he returned to Beaver Island accompanied by Tully O'Malley, Sheriff of Mackinac County, armed with a writ for the arrest of the King on the charge of threatening the life of the pretended Mrs. Adams. Evading the Sheriff, Strang proceeded to Mackinac on a schooner and there took quarters at a hotel, where a few days later he was arrested and brought to trial before Charles O'Malley, a justice of the peace. The ensuing proceedings were a mere travesty on the name of justice. The magistrate, as grossly ignorant of legal procedure as he was prejudiced against the accused, repeatedly committed Strang to prison, from which he as often secured release on habeas corpus procedure. The testimony of Adams and the other witnesses for the prosecution, is of more interest than these details. They swore that they believed Strang to be a dangerous person, and that he had forty men on Beaver Island sworn to do his will, even to the extent of committing murder; while one witness claimed Strang had said in his presence that if Mrs. Adams stayed on Beaver Island until Christmas "she should ride around the Bay on a black-horned buck, with her face backwards and the boys to hoot at her, and whoever kept her company should share her fate."

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* Reports of the success of these meetings are in the Voree *Herald* of January 3, 10, 17, 1850, *et passim*. Similar reports are contained in the letters of Adams to Strang at this time, preserved among the Strang MSS.

† *Northern Islander*, December 12, 1850.

‡ The foregoing presents Strang's version of the affair. For reasons indicated in an earlier chapter, I am constrained to doubt whether Adams' immoral conduct was anything more than a convenient pretext for the Prophet's action in degrading him.

Whatever truth there may have been in these statements, they are entitled to no credit on the strength of the testimony of Adams. He was responsible, next to Strang himself, for whatever iniquity there might be in the Strangite organization. He had given too many glowing testimonials of Strang's divine calling and upright character* to gain credence now for his accusations of Mormon iniquity. Nevertheless, the apostasy of Adams wrought serious injury to the Kingdom. His sensational charges were spread by the press throughout a wide region, and thus an impression was disseminated that the Mormon Kingdom was a seat of unparalleled villainy.† The practical consequence of this belief was the development of a readiness to believe any accusation, however preposterous, that might be made against the Mormons, and a corresponding feeling of sympathy with their opponents, without troubling to inquire into the justice of their contention.

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* For examples see Voree *Herald*, July and August, 1846; August 30 and November 8, 1849; also numerous letters of Adams to Strang, preserved in Strang MSS. As recently as the July, 1850, conference, Adams had uttered a sweeping testimonial of Strang's divine authority, and the duty of the Saints to submit to it.

† In the early summer of 1851 Adams was at Detroit, where at the time of the federal prosecution of Strang and his associates he was engaged in giving public lectures on the iniquities of the Saints. He also appeared as a witness for the prosecution in the trial of Strang. Detroit *Free Press*, May 26 and June 10 and 28, 1851.

In vain did the Prophet, who wielded a facile pen, combat the flood of accusations directed against conditions on Beaver Island. The popular judgment had been rendered, and all efforts to modify it proved futile. An editorial in the *Northern Islander* for April 3, 1851, began, "No fact can be more certain than that throughout the United States there is no *legal protection* to a Mormon." Proceeding, it stated that Strang and all the leading Mormons lived in continual consciousness that there were men around them who were seeking their lives; and that should they be killed the murderers would never be brought to justice by the authorities. It was stated that one Praiseworthy Bower had offered to join a band, if one could be gotten up, to burn the houses of some twenty Mormons on the island, while Thomas Bennett was threatening to have Strang's life before another harvest time. The editor gave warning that the Mormon leaders would not permit themselves to be picked off one by one, but would unitedly resist their enemies. The Mormons had made their last retreat from persecution, and would now "be crushed as a people and swallowed up in one common ruin" rather than purchase temporary respite by sacrificing one another. While making light of the threats of Bower and Bennett, their confidence was not placed in the sanctity of the law, "for we well know it has none. It is in the certainty that should such an aggression be committed, the aggressors would be wiped off the face of the earth before they found rest for the soles of their feet."

Such language, which found frequent repetition in the

Northern Islander from this time forward, marks a great change from the pacifist attitude of Strang in the earlier days of his ministry at Voree. Then he had thundered eloquently against the policy of political and military arrogance at Nauvoo, which he rightly pointed out as the factor chiefly responsible for rousing the gentile mobs against the city. Now he was leading his people along a similar course, which could only end in the expulsion of the Saints from the city of Saint James, even as they had already been expelled from Far West and Nauvoo.

A new assault upon the Mormon Kingdom was made by the authorities at Mackinac with the opening of navigation in the spring of 1851. Somewhat earlier than this, a Mormon constable from Saint James had endeavored to arrest Eri Moore, a fisherman, who was selling whiskey to the Indians on Garden Island.* Anticipating opposition, the Constable took with him a posse of thirteen men, who were, of course, Mormons. With the aid of his friends Moore defied the posse, and after some shooting which did no harm, the Mormon party retired from the field. In this affair the Mormons seem to have been clearly in the right. Yet Moore proceeded to Mackinac and persuaded Justice O'Malley to issue warrants for the arrest of thirty-eight men of Saint James who were charged with being concerned in the transaction against Moore.

The Mormon story of what followed represents that the Sheriff descended upon Saint James with a posse of "thirty intoxicated Indians and eight or ten drunken Irishmen" and without having encountered any resistance or attempted to execute his warrants began hunting the Mormons down like wild beasts.

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* *Northern Islander*, May 1, 1851; *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac*, pp. 29–31.

> Let the citizens of the United States [wrote the Prophet in the *Islander*] imagine a tribe of wild savages, first made drunk, then provided with arms and ammunition, and then let loose upon the peaceable inhabitants of a town, with authority to make prisoners of all the town officers and principal public men, have them whooping about your houses and swearing death against the men they are ostensibly sent to arrest, and you have but a faint picture of the scene that Mr. Sheriff Granger has created for his malignant pleasure upon Beaver Island.

About the time of Granger's visitation, Strang had gone with a company of men to Hog Island to try to save a yawl which had been lost from the wreck of a steamer some time previous. Granger led his posse to the island, and first taking precaution against the Mormons' escaping by stealing their boat and chopping up the yawl, fell at midnight upon their sleeping camp. The alarm was raised too soon, however; the Mormons escaped to the woods, and all but one soon found their way to a leaky fishing boat on the opposite side of the island. It was early April, and the lake was covered with fields of floating ice. The men were but half-clothed, had no food, and the boat was without sails or oarlocks. In this desperate plight they put to sea and after twenty-four hours succeeded in making Gull Island. Here were some unoccupied fishermen's shanties, where they remained five days, burning the huts for fuel and subsisting on fragments of provisions left behind in the shanties. During this time they contrived, without ax or other tools, to put their boat into such a state of repair as to render possible their return to Saint James. Twelve days elapsed in all before they could return to rescue the man left behind on Hog Island. He was found still alive, having subsisted on fish heads and other scraps of refuse, including in his diet some rawhide oarlocks. The conclusion of all this disturbance was the taking of fifteen or twenty men to Mackinac, where two or three were released on bail and the charges against the remainder were dropped. Those let to bail were dismissed at the next term of court.

A few weeks after the Granger raid a tragedy took place at Big Beaver from which the Mormons derived additional unwelcome notoriety. Toward the end of May, Samuel Graham, one of the Mormon leaders, went to Whiskey Point to have an interview with Sheriff Granger. Before he reached the house where Granger was, Richard O'Donnel and James Hay assaulted him with a cane, fracturing his skull and inflicting other serious injuries.* For this offense warrants were issued successively, first by County Judge Greig, and then by M. M. Aldrich, justice of the peace. Both these magistrates were Mormons, however, and the Sheriff refused to execute the warrants.

The Mormons then appealed to William N. McLeod, Prosecuting Attorney for the county of Michilimackinac, who proceeded to Saint James and assumed direction of the matter. A warrant for the arrest of O'Donnel and Hay, issued by Justice Aldrich, was put into the hands of William Chambers, a Mormon constable. Repairing to the fishing ground armed with this warrant, Chambers was stopped by Thomas and Samuel Bennett, armed with guns, who told him the fishermen had banded together to resist all attempts to arrest any of their number. On reporting his rebuff to the Justice, that official issued a new warrant for the arrest of the Bennetts on the charge of obstructing an officer in the discharge of his duty, and Chambers summoned a posse to assist him in executing both warrants. Those summoned at first demurred, but on the threat of the Prosecuting Attorney to take legal action against any who ignored the Constable's summons, a posse of thirty or forty men was raised. With these Chambers returned to the house of the Bennetts and summoned them to surrender. They responded by opening fire on him and he fell, but the posse immediately returned the fire, killing Thomas Bennett and wounding Samuel. Hay made his escape, and O'Donnel fled in an open boat, but was pursued and placed under arrest. Within close range were some threescore fishermen, pledged to resist arrest, but they made no move to come to the relief of the Bennetts, being overawed, probably, by the suddenness of the affair and the evident determination of the posse.

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* For this affair see *Northern Islander*, August 14, 1851; *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac*, pp. 33–35.

A coroner's jury, composed of six Mormons and six gentiles, convened over Thomas Bennett's corpse, brought in a verdict in accordance with the facts, although three of the gentile members declined to sign it on the ground that the Constable had not been shown to be a citizen of the United States. The Mormon procedure in this affair would seem to have been entirely justified, yet far and wide in the press the killing of Thomas Bennett was represented as an act of cold-blooded murder, and Bennett as an innocent citizen who had merely sought to uphold his rights in the face of "Mormon law." Even the *post-mortem* surgical examination was pictured as a barbaric mutilation of the body. It is a sad commentary on the popular voice, which has been frequently supposed to be the voice of God, that it uniformly condemned whatever the Mormons might do, misrepresenting their acts, however innocent, to their disadvantage. A large number of Mormons were arrested for complicity in the killing of Bennett, and held in durance at Mackinac for many weeks. At length they were discharged, no bills having been found against them. Since the administration of justice was at this time wholly in gentile hands this outcome of the affair tends strongly to establish their innocence of wrongdoing.*

A much more celebrated assault upon the Mormons, wherein the accused again came off scatheless, was being made contemporaneously with the Bennett affair. A somewhat lurid account of the case, written in after years by George C. Bates, the United States District Attorney who prosecuted it,† represents that before the petty Kingdom of Prophet Strang the highest authorities of the United States government stood appalled. The nation was still agitated by the bitter struggle over the compromise measures of 1850, and the sudden death of President Taylor followed by the accession of Millard Fillmore to the presidency, had thrown the Whig party into a state of confusion. The electorate of Michigan was almost evenly divided between the two chief political parties, and the Mormon vote of Beaver Island, wholly controlled by Strang, might easily determine the outcome of the state election. With this situation to face, the Democratic state administration of Michigan was not eager to antagonize the Mormon ruler. The Governor solved the difficulty by "passing the buck" to the Whig federal administration, appealing to President Fillmore to bring to an end the "disorder, riots, and crimes of the Mormon people at the Beaver Islands." The President, however, was "cautious, cold, and calculating"; he was even now laying his plans to secure the Whig nomination to succeed himself at the Baltimore convention of 1852, and he had a lively concern over the possibility that the Beaver Island Mormons might cast the deciding vote in the coming election against him and in favor of the Democratic candidate. Webster, his "godlike" Secretary of State and the dominant figure in the Administration, had, like his chief, an interest in the approaching presidential convention and a tender regard for the Mormon vote, and he felt that the reduction of the Mormons to order might well be left to the Democratic Michigan state government. After many notes had been passed and much red tape cut, however, Senator Stephen A. Douglas, "a gallant, true, and straightforward Democrat," who had had much experience with the Mormons in Illinois, was called into consultation, and "then, as always, his voice was for war on anybody and everybody who resisted the constituted authorities of the nation." The Administration, its backbone thus strengthened, now issued orders through the Attorney-General to the District Attorney at Detroit to institute legal proceedings against Strang and his confederates. Simultaneously, through the Secretary of the Navy, the command went forth to Captain Bullis of the U.S. Steamship *Michigan* to proceed to Detroit, equipped for action, and place himself under the orders of the District Attorney.

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* For important corroborative information in this general connection see the Detroit *Free Press*, June 14, 1851.

† Narrative by George C. Bates of "The Beaver Island Prophets' Trial in this City in 1851," in Detroit *Tribune*, July 10, 1877. Reprinted in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, XXXII, 225–235. The contemporary Mormon version of this affair is found in the issues of the *Northern Islander* for June 5 and July 24, 1851; July 15, 1852; May 31, 1855; and in Strang's *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac*, pp. 31–33.

The course of human affairs presents to the observer, oftentimes, a strange intermingling of tragedy and comedy. In the matter before us the Mormons supply the tragedy and the United States government as represented by District Attorney Bates the comedy. It was a case of Don Quixote going out in real life, in the middle of the nineteenth century, to make war upon a windmill. The fevered imagination of the District Attorney, fed upon the exaggerated or mendacious tales emanating from Mackinac and caught up and embellished by the press of a wide region, perceived in the tiny island community which, at least at this particular time, desired above all else to be let alone, a distinct and deadly menace to the peace and security of the great Republic. Warrants were obtained charging Strang and his confederates with treason, robbery of the mails, counterfeiting, and trespassing upon United States lands. Equipped with these and supported by forty well-armed men under the command of "General" Schwartz, Bates embarked on the *Michigan* for the distant Beavers.

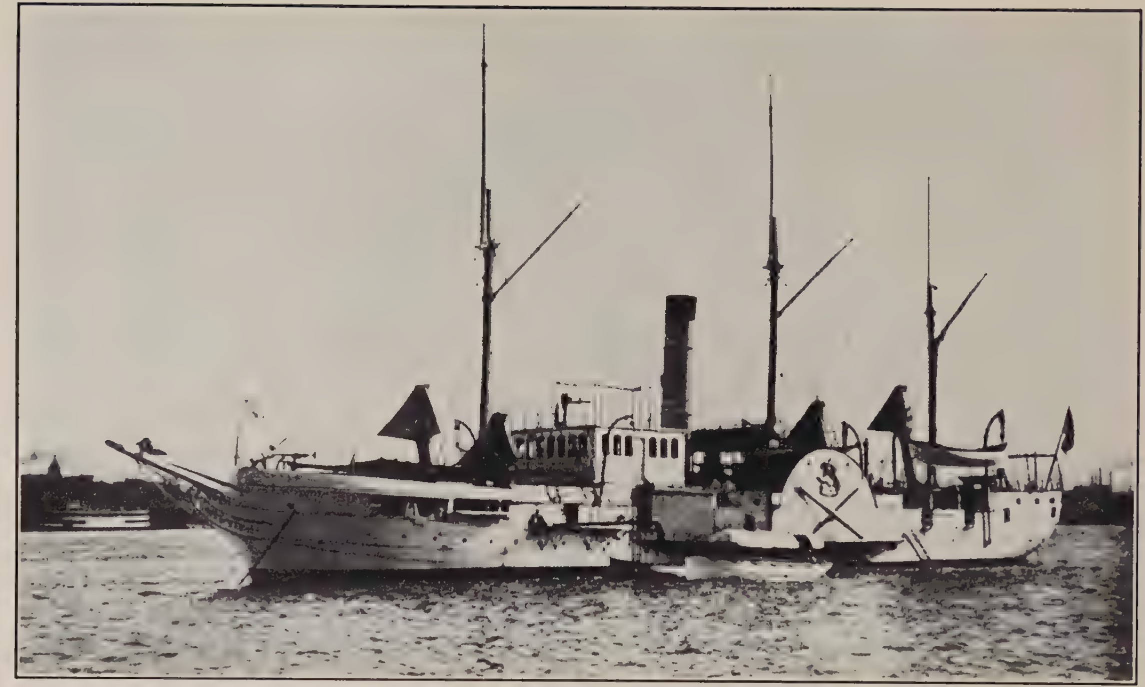
The District Attorney's story of what followed would not withstand a very severe cross-examination, but it is interesting, nevertheless, for the light it sheds upon the hysterical state of mind of the local gentile public upon the Mormon question. At Mackinac, Judge Greig, the sole Mormon official of the county, was holding court. Before reaching this place the District Attorney devised, "with the aid of Captain Bullis's United States Navy," a highly ingenious plan for the capture of those against whom the warrants he carried had been issued. At half after three o'clock the steamer anchored in the Strait half a musket shot away from the front door of the courthouse, and her cannon was trained upon the building. The captain's gig was now lowered "with all the pomp and ceremony of war," and in it the brave Attorney, accompanied by an officer or two, pulled ashore. Proceeding to the court room he ordered the amazed Judge to consider himself under arrest and adjourn the court and come on board. The Judge was directing his aides to arrest the intruders for contempt of court, when the District Attorney apprised him "that by raising his eye he would see the guns of the *Michigan* trained upon him and his courthouse," and that any hesitancy or resistance "would result in the destruction of the building and his own death." The clerk was directed to "enter the adjournment" and the Attorney's aides to seize the Judge and conduct him on board the ship, where Captain Bullis "in full naval uniform" received him and escorted him below.

> In less than half an hour from the time the *Michigan* let go her anchor it was tied up again, and she was steaming gently away toward the Beaver Island with the Hon. J. M. Greig as prisoner, confined below decks, in utter amazement at the coolness and impudence of those authorities by whom he had been taken by violence, as he thought, from the judgment seat of the kingdom of James the First.

Well might he be amazed, for surely such procedure was never elsewhere heard of outside the pages of Gilbert and Sullivan, and Judge Greig was born too early to enjoy the privilege of perusing these. Mackinac was not a Mormon town, but instead the chief stronghold of the gentile opposition; and whatever the case might have been at Saint James, at Mackinac Judge Greig had none but gentile associates. The performance of the District Attorney in arresting him was, therefore, as needless as it was ridiculous.

But worse treatment was yet in store for the abducted Judge. From Mackinac to Saint James the distance is about fifty miles. Orders were issued for the *Michigan* to proceed slowly enough to arrive in the harbor about two o'clock in the morning. *En route* the District Attorney subjected the Judge to a third degree performance calculated to extort from him a letter to Strang and directions where the King could be found. That his residence was but a few yards from the water's edge was known, of course, to every fisherman at Mackinac, but the Attorney was intent, apparently, on learning this from other sources. When the Judge proved recalcitrant, he pointed to the yardarm over the cabin and "in the most solemn manner possible" told the prisoner that unless he gave such a letter within one hour he should swing from it "as certain as the stars twinkled above it." Captain Bullis was now called in, of whom the Judge inquired, pardonably enough, whether "the District Attorney was drunk or crazy"; whereupon the naval officer produced his orders placing him at the command of the District Attorney and confirmed that dignitary's representations by saying that if ordered to do so he should be bound to "swing" the prisoner from the yardarm. The unhappy Judge now yielded, and not only wrote the desired letter but drew a chart to show how the King might be reached in the night. Armed with this, and followed by a suitable body of men, each "well armed with navy revolver, cutlass, and a covered ship's globe lantern," the Attorney "pulled with muffled oars to the beach," and leaving a sailor to guard the boat, set out by a circuitous pathway for the home of the King, who was slumbering peacefully in his bed, as unconscious of the impending naval visitation as Judge Greig had been in his court room a few hours earlier. Stationing the "big boatswain" at one end of the house, and the "young boatswain" at the other, the Attorney and his "faithful deputy" entered; creeping quietly up the stairs they found themselves in "a long, low room, where wide berths, heavily draped with stunning calico, shielded beds like the berths and staterooms of steamers, which proved to be occupied by Mormon women four in a bed."

We forbear, from considerations of space, to describe in detail the further adventures of the bold intruders upon this enchanting scene. Suffice it to say, that with the aid of Judge Greig's letter, representing that but for the Prophet's presence he would be hanged at dawn, that worthy was enticed on board the *Michigan*. Here, after a "hearty breakfast," the King was induced, by the same threat of hanging



THE STEAMER *MICHIGAN*

Called in recent years the *Wolverine*. The photograph is from this later period.

which had already intimidated Judge Greig, to send out a request for such of his followers as were wanted by the District Attorney to come on board; and

> ere the sun went down in that beautiful bay the steamer *Michigan*, with a Mormon freight of over 100 men and women, steamed out to sea, and in two days landed them at the dock at the foot of Woodward Avenue [Detroit]; and this band of strange people were marched like Jack Falstaff's troops through Woodward Avenue up to the old jail . . . while the streets were lined with amazed and amused spectators of this motley band of prophets, apostles, disciples, and devils.

We turn for a moment to the more prosaic, but not for this reason less truthful, account of the arrest given by its principal victim, Prophet Strang. He relates that President Fillmore, being in Detroit on a visit to his brother, there heard complaints of Mormon offenses against the United States laws, such as treason, counterfeiting, mail robbery, and trespassing upon public lands. The President ordered a sweeping investigation to be made and placed the U.S. steamer *Michigan* at the disposal of the District Attorney in carrying it out. The first intimation the Mormons had of this measure was afforded when the ship arrived at Mackinac just after Judge Greig had adjourned court. That official went on board and with great difficulty persuaded the District Attorney and the Marshal to go about the matter peaceably, avoiding any hostile demonstration. In pursuance of this advice, on arriving in the harbor of Saint James about midnight, the Attorney went ashore alone and inquired for Strang. An interview was soon arranged, which Bates began by seeking to convince Strang of his helplessness and the wisdom of surrendering peaceably. On asking to see the papers, the Prophet was told they were on the ship. It was agreed that Strang should go aboard to inspect them, after which he might surrender himself to the officer charged with his arrest or at his option be put ashore with the pledge that he should not be pursued or molested for a space of fifteen minutes.

On the *Michigan*, Strang was shown a list of thirty-eight names (besides his own) of men charged with trespass, while some of them were also charged with the other crimes we have noted. He sent the list ashore with the request that the persons concerned come to the wharf to be arrested, and within two hours thirty-one men, all of those sought who were on the island, did so. An awning was spread on the deck of the vessel and preparations were made to hold a commissioner's court, when McKinley, one of the complainants, expressed his inability to produce his witnesses, since some of them were nearer Detroit than Saint James. Court was thereupon dismissed and an agreement entered into that Strang and three others should go under surveillance to Detroit, there to be the subjects of further judicial proceedings; Strang became responsible, also, for the appearance of four others at Detroit should bills be found against them; the rest of the defendants were discharged.

The trial of Strang and his associates in the United States District Court at Detroit on the charge of robbing the mail went on from the latter part of May until the ninth of July, the case being tried and decided adversely to the accused in the press long before the conclusion of its passage through the court. It is significant of the character of the government's evidence against these men that during the entire trial, although accused of the gravest of crimes, they were permitted to go unconfined and free of bail, their presence being secured by the mere personal pledge of Strang. Although the defendants were charged with attacking a mail train in broad day in close proximity to an Indian village and in the presence of several white men, the U.S. commissioner sent to take testimony on the spot could obtain, after the examination of scores of witnesses, no supporting evidence. The jury, composed of ten Whigs and two Democrats, acquitted the defendants, and the remaining indictments against them were therefore dismissed.*

The District Attorney attributed his failure to the judge's charge to the jury against prosecutions for religion's sake. "Although the evidence was quite clear against them," the jury "seemed to have imbibed the idea that these men were on trial for religion's sake," hence the acquittal. Strang made a dramatic and powerful speech to the jury, comparing himself to Christ, and the prosecution to the lawyers and Pharisees who persecuted him.

From the vantage point of eighty years' detachment from the scene of conflict, we are disposed to agree, in the main, with the jury. The Mormon *régime* which Prophet Strang had set up at the Beaver Islands was necessarily productive of consequences of the gravest import for the peace and happiness of this section of the state of Michigan. But the charges made by District Attorney Bates were the product of excited gentile imaginations, and the utter collapse of the prosecution affords, as Strang himself shortly pointed out, the best evidence of the innocence of the accused. That timber had been cut by the Mormons on public land is, indeed, undeniable; but men did this everywhere on the frontier without any sense of wrongdoing; and in the particular case before us Strang produced an official letter from Bates giving him permission to cut government timber. As for counterfeiting, Strang explained that George J. Adams had persuaded a young fellow at Mackinac to tell a tale of a counterfeiting rendezvous in a cave in the sand heap which the Mormons dignified by the name of Mount Pisgah. Bates' party had taken the youth aboard at Mackinac, and being unexpectedly called upon to verify the story in a legal proceeding he had gone blindly on until the moment arrived to point out the place. Then he broke down and "in shame and confusion" confessed the deception.

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* At Detroit the *Advertiser* (Whig) bitterly denounced Strang and his fellows in misfortune, while the *Free Press* (Democratic) pronounced the *Advertiser's* conduct infamous, and affirmed that the only thing proved against the accused was the fact that they were Mormons. The political complexion of the jury (ten Whigs and two Democrats) testifies to the adroitness of the Prosecuting Attorney, while the decision rendered by the jurors proclaims all the more eloquently the weakness of his case. See *Free Press*, July 10 and 14, 1851.

CHAPTER IX

The King as Lawgiver

THIS establishment of a theocratic kingdom within the borders of the United States was attended by numerous complexities, some of which are still difficult to explain. Strang was a shrewd and able man, and he could not fail to realize the folly of engaging in rebellion against the government of the United States.* He therefore adopted a course designed to reconcile as skilfully as might be the anomalies of the situation in which he had placed himself. Far from opposing the federal and state authority, he made use of the votes at his command to gain control of the agencies of local government, and so well did he succeed that within a few years he was entertaining visions of controlling not merely the Michigan state election but the choice of President of the United States itself. To his own followers he was the ruler of an actual kingdom to which they owed a more real and intimate allegiance than to the government of the United States. But he had the sense to realize that this rule could not be imposed upon unbelievers, and that its practical application even to his own followers was subject to numerous limitations.† In short, the Prophet had in theory made himself the head of a theocratic monarchy; but in practice, pending the destruction of "Babylon the Great," which all Mormons confidently anticipated, he ruled as best he might through a combined process of dictation to his followers, and manipulation of the ordinary agencies of local government.

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* The language he employed during the period of the Kingdom seems often to belie this conclusion, but his conduct until the end of his career bears it out.

† For example, the church law prescribed the death penalty for adultery. Such an ordinance obviously could not be enforced at Beaver Island. Strang did not hesitate to state publicly in his paper, however, that only the necessity of deferring to the civil law prevented the enforcement of the church law on this subject.

The character of the rule Strang aspired to establish may be clearly seen in the pages of the Book of the Law of the Lord. Here, in forty-seven chapters, a complete framework of government is provided, applicable to any population, however great, and laying down regulations for the most important relations of human society. A more centralized autocracy, it is safe to say, the mind of man never devised. Strang himself was King of the Earth by direct appointment of God.* For the support of his government a thoroughgoing system of tithing was provided,† with sweeping provisions for its enforcement. All lands were in the hands of the King, to apportion to his subjects at his discretion.‡ The King had complete control of highways, including the authority to lay them out, to provide for their administration, and to levy tolls upon those who used them.§ The King was the fountainhead of justice, having power "over the Princes and Rulers, and over all that sit in judgment."‖ He declared the laws and commandments, and it was his duty to destroy traitors and overthrow rebellion. Needless to add, perhaps, he controlled the army and navy.¶ He might appoint viceroys, but these officials were limited in all respects by the power that created them. He appointed councilors and judges, apostles and priests. He ordained deacons, "men of stout heart, strong arm, and swift foot," in every city to be keepers of the prisons and execute the judgments of the courts.

Whatever may be thought as to the divine origin alleged for the Book of the Law of the Lord, many of its provisions were well in advance of the age. Thus, isolation, the chief drawback to American rural life, was obviated by the device of granting a town lot as a part of each "inheritance" and requiring the Saints to live together in villages and cities.* Half a century in advance of the modern movement for the conservation of natural resources, far-sighted regulations were provided concerning the planting of trees and the preservation of the timber supply. Trees were to be planted by the roadside both in town and country, while in the cities there was generous provision for "abundant publick parks and watering places," to which old and young might resort for rest and recreation.

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* Book of the Law of the Lord, chap. xx.

† *Ibid.*, chap. xlvi.

‡ *Ibid.*, chap. xli.

§ *Ibid.*, chap. xlv.

‖ *Ibid.*, chap. xxi.

¶ *Ibid.*, chap. xxii.

Along with these beneficial regulations, two surprising changes in the Strangite organization accompanied the establishment of the Kingdom: the practice of polygamy was adopted and the institution of communism was abandoned. The first of these changes has been discussed in an earlier chapter. As for the latter, despite its divinely ordained basis, the communistic Order of Enoch had evidently proved a sad failure. Although the revelation of January 7, 1849, had expressly commanded its establishment at the Beaver Islands, to be observed by all the Saints, it was now quietly abandoned in favor of the device of individual inheritances. A shadow of communism was sought to be preserved, however, in the institution of "princes" or patrons. Groups of Mormons were encouraged to associate themselves under the patronage of a chosen leader, sharing his table and house.† Even this faint approach to communism, however, seems never to have become firmly rooted among the Saints of the islands.

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* An "inheritance" was an allotment of land by the Prophet to a Saint, in proportion to his need. The design at Beaver Island contemplated that each inheritance should consist of a village lot and about 160 acres of farm land.

† Allusions in Book of the Law of the Lord, and oral information of Wingfield Watson, who attached himself for a time to one of these groups.

The fortunes of the Mormon Kingdom seemed at their nadir during the trial of Strang and his associates at Detroit. In the season when the growing crops demanded the labor of all, the island was for weeks deprived of the services of the great majority of its adult male population. Strang records that between April 11 and June 23, 1851, ninety-nine Mormons were arrested on Beaver Island and carried to distant places for trial on criminal charges. In addition, many were taken as witnesses, so that at one time but twenty-four men were left on the island.* In this emergency the women went into the fields and cultivated the crops which were essential for the subsistence of the settlement through the winter.

To add to the trials of the Saints, hostile individuals clothed with official authority went through the settlement in the absence of its protectors, and plundered at will the property of the Mormons. They even apportioned among themselves the farms of the Saints who were undergoing trial at Mackinac or Detroit, awaiting only the expected news of their conviction to enter into possession of the property.† But none were convicted, and upon their return to their homes the injured Saints served notice of their intention to exact legal reparation of their despoilers. Doctor McCulloch, from whose dock a large quantity of wood had been taken, began a prosecution of one of the offenders, in the course of which the details of the peculations were laid bare. In consequence the plunderers hastened to make restitution to those they had wronged, their zeal in this being quickened by the prompt conviction, with exemplary damages awarded, of such as rejected the Mormon overtures for a fair settlement. It is perhaps needless to add that these trials were held in a Mormon court, the magistrate of which was King Strang himself, sitting in the capacity of justice of the peace at Saint James.

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* *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac*, p. 35.

† *Northern Islander*, August 14, 1851.

The revulsion of the Saints from the despair of early summer, when all but a few of the faithful believed the settlement was about to be broken up, was rapid. In a mid-August editorial appeal to the Saints abroad to hasten their "gathering" to the islands, the *Islander* states* that Strang, who three months before was being hunted by sixty armed men with the avowed intention of shooting him at sight, now "sits quietly in his own house, without keeping one of his trusted friends by to assist him, and dispenses the law to these same men as a Justice of the Peace; and when business requires, goes alone and unarmed in the midst of them, without molestation or danger." Never, since the first Mormon set foot on the island, had they been as secure from danger as at the present time. "A strong hand, never departing from the right, will secure respect anywhere," the editorial concluded; "but vacillation makes us despised."

The Beaver Islands had, in 1847, been erected by the State Legislature into the township of Peaine; although a part of Emmet County, the township was attached to Mackinac for judicial purposes, to Newaygo for the election of state representative, and to Lapeer for the election of state senator. These political circumstances, combined with the geographical features, gave the Mormons complete control upon the islands. They proceeded, in the spring of 1852, to enact in township meetings numerous ordinances suitable to the government of the community.

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* *Ibid.*

A portion of Paradise Bay was designated as a quarantine station; a hospital for the care of persons afflicted with contagious diseases was established; elaborate provisions governing the keeping and control of dogs, domestic animals, and gunpowder were enacted; a board of health was charged with a periodical inspection of the fishing stations.* That all authority on the islands centered in the hands of the Prophet is amply evident. He was the township supervisor, and one of the township justices of the peace. As supervisor he was *ex officio* moderator of the township meetings, and member and chairman of the board of health. Thus, to his complete control of the Mormon population by virtue of his position as head of the Church,† he added control of the gentile element by reason of centering the civil government of the township in his hands. A serious drawback from the Mormon point of view, however, was the fact that the administration of Mackinac County, to which Peaine Township was attached for judicial purposes, was bitterly hostile to the Mormon *régime.*

From this measure of gentile control Strang shortly emancipated his Kingdom by turning to his advantage one of those wholly unusual situations which are more likely to arise on the frontier than in older and better organized communities. The legislative apportionment law passed in 1851 attached the unorganized counties of Emmet and

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*The ordinances are published in the *Northern Islander*, April 22, 1852.

†The nature of his churchly dominion has already been examined. It may be noted in this connection that it was an offense against Mormon law for one of the Saints to institute legal procedure against another in the civil courts. An illustration of the workings of the church courts is the following, related to the writer by Wingfield Watson. A Saint had lost a twenty-dollar gold piece, which was found and retained by another Mormon. The latter was put on trial before Strang, sitting in his ecclesiastical capacity, charged with wrongfully retaining possession of the property thus found. He pleaded ignorance of the ownership of the coin but was found guilty and sentenced in accordance with the church law, to make fourfold restitution.

Cheboygan to the Newaygo representative district; the district canvass was held within one week after the election at a place several hundred miles distant, by any traveled route, from the Beaver Islands, and no provision was made for carrying the returns from there to the place appointed for canvassing them. Unless this situation was due to some oversight on the part of the framers of the law, it would seem to lend color to the Mormon charge that it was deliberately planned to disfranchise the Mormon settlement.

At the election of November 2, 1852, Strang put himself forward as candidate for the State Assembly from the Newaygo district, his candidacy being kept secret until the day of election, and received every one of the 165 votes cast at the Beaver Islands.* The avowed candidates for the office remained blissfully ignorant of their dark horse rival, or even of the fact that the Beaver Islands were included in the Newaygo district, until the election canvassers at distant Newaygo were suddenly confronted by one of the publishers of the *Northern Islander*, who announced himself as canvasser for all the unorganized counties attached to Michilimackinac, and convinced them that the Beaver Islands were in their district. The solid Mormon vote which he carried sufficed to elect the Prophet to the State Assembly. The *Islander* had strongly predicted this result on November 11, long before news of the canvass could be returned to Saint James. Thus by a clever coup the ruler of the island kingdom had attained the vantage point of the State Legislature, from which to prosecute his further designs for the upbuilding of his dominion and the confounding of his opponents.

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* For accounts of the election see *Northern Islander*, November 11, 1852; *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac*, pp. 38–39. It is significant of Strang's political control of his followers, that in this election, although twenty offices were to be filled, in no case did the Whig candidate receive more than one vote, while the votes for the Democratic candidates ranged from 154 to 164. An editorial on the election (*Northern Islander*, November 11, 1852) explained that the Democratic party was liked no better than the Whig; the solid Mormon vote against the latter was due to its having persecuted the Mormons "as a party measure."

Never, perhaps, in legislative history did a member-elect enter upon his duties under more discouraging auspices, or conclude them with more substantial credit, than fell to the lot of the new member from Newaygo district. His opponents at Mackinac, intent on preventing him from taking his seat at all, disinterred an old indictment against Strang, the existence of which the court officials had for a long time ignored, and proposed to throw him into prison as he passed through Mackinac *en route* to the state capital. This design the Prophet forestalled by journeying by way of Green Bay. The District Attorney for the Upper Peninsula thereupon engaged an officer to arrest Strang at Lansing immediately before the call of the House.* For the rest, his certificate of election was abstracted from the files of the Secretary of State, and his nearest opponent in the election was on hand prepared to take possession, unopposed, of the contested seat.

Through the ingenuity and determination of Strang the plot totally miscarried. He resisted the attempt to remove him from the chamber, and laid before the House a duplicate certificate of election. A committee appointed by that body to inquire into the matter rendered a report declaring the arrest had been attempted not with a view to the furtherance of justice, but with an intent to accomplish some unworthy purpose, and to deprive the House and Strang's constituency of his services. By unanimous vote of the House this report was adopted and Strang was discharged from

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*The report of the House committee on the case is printed in the *Northern Islander* for May, 1853. See also issue of June 30, 1853, and *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac*, pp. 39–40.

arrest. The petition of his Newaygo opponent for leave to contest his seat was then brought up and referred to the committee on elections, which returned two reports, one favorable and the other adverse to Strang's title. Both parties were thereupon given leave to be heard at the bar of the House. An advocate spoke for Strang's opponent, while the Prophet himself undertook to plead his own cause. According to the Lansing *State Journal*, he spoke "with a force of reasoning, energy, and eloquence which, whatever may be the result, will leave a most favorable opinion of his personal qualifications for the position he claims." The "result" upheld Strang by a vote of forty-nine to eleven, three-fifths of the Whig votes being cast, significantly enough, in his favor, in addition to practically nine-tenths of the Democratic votes.

The effort to deprive Strang of the office to which he had been elected had resulted in making him the best advertised member of the House; and the tact and ability which he displayed in defending his title to the seat won general sympathy and respect. "He is a talented man, equal to any other man in debate and general information," said the Jackson *Citizen*. "Mr. Strang is confessedly the most talented and ready debater in the House," wrote the *Temperance Advocate;* while a little later the Detroit *Free Press* succinctly summed up his legislative career as on the whole "an eloquent and honorable one."

The Newaygo district as then constituted comprised over twenty counties, and the Mormon Prophet was the legislative representative of one-fourth the area of the state. For the government of this sparsely settled region there had been passed at different times a motley conglomeration of legislative acts which had never been harmonized into one consistent whole, and which stood in sad need of comprehensive revision. Thus, Oceana and Newaygo were organized counties, detached from all others, yet they had no judiciary other than justices of the peace and judges of probate,* and no crime could be legally punished. The Grand Traverse settlements had no legal county organization, nor were they attached to any existing county; they were, therefore, "utterly without law." Approximately one-fourth of the state had but a single organized township, and it was a matter of doubt or dispute as to what county a number of the largest settlements in the district belonged.† To his credit, Strang made himself the guardian of the varied interests of the whole Newaygo district. During his term of office the organization of Grand Traverse County was perfected, two new counties and eight new townships were organized, and a judiciary and a municipal government were provided for all parts of the district. Although "its local wants were more numerous than those of any other district," boasted the *Northern Islander* of May 5, 1853, "not a local measure was committed to Mr. Strang's charge (except a petition to change the name of a township sent the last week of the session) but it was carried."

But such service did not suffice to win for Strang surcease from the sort of opposition which had marked the beginning of his legislative career. Along with the other constructive work of his first term, Strang had secured the complete separation of the Beaver Islands from Mackinac County by the organization of the county of Emmet. It comprised, in addition to the islands, a considerable district of the adjoining mainland, then inhabited chiefly by Indians, along with some gentile whites, who were chiefly fishermen congregated at the mouth of Pine River, the site of the modern resort city of Charlevoix. The bulk of the voting population of Emmet County consisted of the Mormon residents of the islands. In the election of 1854, Strang received every vote from Emmet County and all but one from Cheboygan, 695 in all. In like fashion the candidate from Newaygo received practically the unanimous vote of his locality, while one Lay of Grand Traverse County obtained all but six of the 373 votes cast there. In the face of this pronounced majority, a maneuver was instituted to seat Lay instead of Strang, without giving the latter a hearing.* This was defeated by the opportune publication in the Lansing *State Journal* of a powerful argument demonstrating the superiority of Strang's title from whatever point of view the matter was examined.† The schemers now passed a resolution in caucus, according to the *Islander*, that no bill introduced by Strang should be allowed to pass. Notwithstanding, he succeeded in playing again a prominent rôle in the legislature. Even in those cases where his measures were defeated "the justice of God did not slumber,"‡ for they included measures of no concern to the Mormons but of much importance to Grand Traverse and Mackinac counties, whose spokesmen had been chiefly instrumental in placing difficulties in the path of Strang's legislative efforts.

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* *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac*, p. 40.

† The circumstances, already recounted, under which Strang was elected to the legislature afford a good concrete illustration of the haphazard administrative and legal situation.

Of particular importance from the point of view of the present narrative was the action taken changing the bounds of Emmet County and creating the new county of Manitue. From the county of Emmet as organized by the act of January 29, 1853, secured during Strang's first legislative session, the Beaver Island group, North and South Fox, and North and South Manitue Islands were removed and organized as the new county of Manitue. By a separate act the mainland portion of Emmet County as originally created was reorganized as the county of Emmet. The Mormons claimed that the original act of 1853 creating the county was regarded by all parties in the light of a compromise measure; the territory thus organized was to be regarded as a Mormon reserve, which they might develop and govern as they should see fit, thus putting an end to the unhappy clashes which had so long recurred while the Beavers were attached to the county of Mackinac. The avowed motive of the new legislation was to restrict the Mormons to the islands.* But once again the "justice of God" operated to the confounding of the gentiles; for when the first election was held in the reorganized county of Emmet, the entire Mormon ticket was chosen without opposition.†

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* *Northern Islander,* July 5, 1855. † Copied in *ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.*

Thus, instead of one county, the Saints were now in control of two, with the prospect of establishing a settlement in Antrim County on Grand Traverse Bay; and their official organ, the *Northern Islander*, exultingly inquired whether the settlers of Grand Traverse County, who had sent a petition to the State Legislature for the dismemberment of Emmet County, were not gratified over the fact that by this means they had "brought the Mormons twenty-four miles nearer home."‡ Some thirty Mormons had settled in Emmet County just before the election, too late to acquire the right to vote. Although the majority of the population were Mormons, the majority of the legal voters were gentiles. The result of the vote seemed to refute the representations made at Lansing the winter before as to the dislike of the gentile element of the county for the Mormon rule. John S. Dixon had spent the winter at Lansing capitalizing the anti-

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* *Northern Islander*, June 21, 1855. The acts are printed, *ibid.*, May 31, 1855.

† *Ibid.*, June 21, 1855. Two of the men elected were not Mormons, but they were nominated by, and acceptable to, that element.

‡ *Ibid.*

Mormon prejudices in an effort to have the township wherein Pine River settlement lay set off from Emmet and added to Grand Traverse County. Failing in this, he now put himself forward as candidate for the offices of supervisor, school inspector, and justice of the peace. He received but one vote for supervisor, presumably his own; for the other offices he received two votes, which circumstance the Mormons explained by saying that the second was cast by his hired man.*

A notable indirect consequence of the organization of Emmet County was the renewal of open hostilities between Mackinac and Beaver Island, culminating in the battle of Pine River in July, 1853. The legislature of 1851 had passed an act to restrict the sale of intoxicating liquors, which was followed by still more stringent measures in 1853 and 1855. The act of 1851 penalized the sale or gift of intoxicating liquor to Indians, and further provided that no one might vend in less quantity than twenty-eight gallons unless he should first give bond with two or more responsible sureties to answer for any damages that might result from their use. As long as Mackinac County had jurisdiction over the fishing grounds this law remained, outside of Peaine Township, a dead letter, but on the organization of Emmet County the Mormons promptly initiated measures looking to its enforcement within their jurisdiction. The act of the same session organizing Emmet County gave to it jurisdiction, concurrently with other counties, over the waters of Lake Michigan. Within the limits of Emmet County were several hundred Indian families, who made their living chiefly by fishing. Left to themselves they were at least reasonably industrious and prosperous,† but, as ever with the red man, they were unable to resist the fatal lure of alcohol. The traders found in the debauchery of these Indians an exceedingly profitable source of revenue. Strang estimated that the five hundred Indian fishermen of Emmet County, even when debauched by liquor, took $100,000 worth of fish in a year. Three-fourths of their pay was received in "Indian whiskey,"* which cost the trader five or six cents a gallon, and the Indian fifty cents to one dollar; the remainder, in goods of poor quality at such prices as an intoxicated Indian could be induced to pay for them.

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* *Ibid.*, June 14, 1855.

† Strang stated that the average annual family catch of fish "when

There was nothing peculiarly heinous in the conduct of the Mackinac traders, for we have here but the ancient tale, as old as the Indian trade, of the debauchery of the red man by the white. The peculiar element of the particular situation before us was supplied by the Mormons. Commonly the only opposition to the traders' supplying the Indian with whiskey proceeded from distant governmental edicts or from missionaries to the red man. As a rule the trader ignored or defied these authorities with equal impunity. But the Beaver Island Mormons had a peculiar interest in the welfare of their Indian neighbors. One of their primary motives for settling on the islands had been that of conducting there missionary work with the Indians who congregated from a wide region at the upper end of Lake Michigan; in addition, the Saints held in peculiar abhorrence intemperance and the chain of vicious practices which fol-

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sober" was one hundred barrels, which sold on the grounds for four dollars a barrel. All things considered, this income was sufficient to render them prosperous. In recent years, however, they had averaged only half this catch, "the balance of time, and nearly all the avails, being sacrificed for liquor." Letter in New York *Tribune*, July 2, 1853.

* A barrel of "Indian whiskey" consisted of two gallons of alcohol, thirty gallons of water, tobacco enough to make it intoxicating, and cayenne pepper enough to give the mixture sufficient strength to entitle it to the Indian designation of "firewater." It sold, according to Strang, at twenty-five cents a quart or, by the cask, at fifty cents a gallon.

lowed in its train. Over against the usual spectacle of a frontier populace which viewed with indifference or even positive sympathy the traders' pursuit of the liquor trade with the natives, therefore, was presented the unusual one of a large and influential local community inflexibly determined to enforce the laws governing that traffic; and the erection of Emmet County had placed the agencies of local administration wholly in the hands of the latter.

The Mormon ruler initiated his program of law enforcement by assembling all the men of the county who could qualify as sureties,* and on discussion all pledged themselves not to become bondsmen for any person to sell liquor.† That the traders might be forewarned of the intended enforcement of the law in Emmet County, a notice was published in the *Northern Islander* of May 5, 1853,‡ warning them that authority to sell liquor in Mackinac did not carry with it the right to sell on Lake Michigan. From Old Mackinac§ to the west line of the state, and south to Grand Traverse Light, the Lake and all the bays were now under the jurisdiction of Emmet County.

> If the trade is persisted in [the notice concluded] the sheriff will go out with sufficient force and make arrests in all such cases. The law will be enforced whatever the cost. He is a fool who at this day thinks he can defeat it by crying pirates, robbers. That cry has been raised once too much.

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* The act required the liquor dealer to give bond in the sum of five hundred to one thousand dollars, the precise amount (within these limits) to be fixed by the local authorities, and to secure two or more sureties each of whom had unincumbered property amounting to at least twice the face of the bond. The Mormons would, of course, fix the bond at the higher limit. Under these conditions the number of men in Emmet County who could qualify as sureties must have been comparatively small.

† Letter in New York *Tribune*, July 2, 1853.

‡ The date on the inner page shows that the paper was not issued until May 12.

§ Modern Mackinaw City.

The response of Mackinac to this notice was both prompt and plain-spoken. A notice issued May 16, over the names of the county supervisor, the district attorney, and four justices of the peace, requested the citizens to meet at the courthouse the following day "at the ringing of the bell," to devise ways and means of protecting themselves against the "felonious depredations" of the Mormons. The meeting adopted a series of resolutions inveighing against the "high-handed pretensions and immoral course of the people called Mormons." Coming to the immediate point in question, it resolved that the organization of Emmet County and Drummond Township,* "taken in consideration with the avowed determination of the Mormons to make forcible arrests under color of law" was highly dangerous to the rights and interests of the citizens of Mackinac. A Committee of Safety was therefore created, charged with the duty of memorializing the President and the Governor of Michigan, besides taking such other steps as might be conducive to the "public safety." Some resolutions sent down by the fishermen of Pine River and Gull Island, expressing the determination to take the law into their own hands were read, and it was voted to publish the proceedings in the Detroit papers. Although no express approval was given the utterance of the fishermen, they were described as "seventy resolute men who know the importance of the step they have taken," and the whole purport of the proceedings was to encourage them in their course.

It would be charitable to suppose that the district attorney who presided over this gathering, and the four magistrates who lent their influence to its proceedings, failed to realize the true character of their course. In all the turbulent history of the liquor business in America it would be difficult to find a more unblushing defiance of law and order, or a bolder commendation of an announced intention to defy it, than the one offered to the world by these magistrates and citizens of Mackinac. For the tragic affair of Pine River which followed a few weeks later, they cannot escape a heavy measure of responsibility.* On behalf of Emmet County, Strang answered the ebullition from Mackinac with a dignified and crushing rejoinder, which appeared in the *Islander* of June 30.

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* This included Drummond Island in Lake Huron and a considerable stretch of the adjoining waters. Its organization was one of the measures put through by Strang in the session of 1853.

> Our reply to Mackinac and her allies [it concluded] is, "let words cease and deeds begin." We prefer peace; but if war must come, let it be upon us and not upon our children. We shall not yield a step to the threats, and are ready today for the blow.

One of the most attractive spots on the Great Lakes is the beautiful resort region which centers at the modern town of Charlevoix, on the Michigan mainland opposite the Beaver Islands. Here, at the present time, is a fine inland harbor, through which the waters of Pine Lake find their way into Lake Michigan. Pine Lake is a beautiful sheet of water, running many miles inland; its shores are dotted with summer cottages, and into it empty some of the most noted trout streams of northern Michigan. In Strang's day, Pine Lake emptied by a shallow stream into Round Lake, a small sheet of water, and a short outlet, known as Pine River, connected the latter with the waters of Lake Michigan, perhaps a third of a mile away. In their natural state, this outlet and the one connecting Pine and Round lakes could be traversed only by small boats. Government engineers have since dredged Pine River so that it may be entered with ease by the largest lake steamers, and Round Lake has become the harbor for the port of Charlevoix.

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* The proceedings at Mackinac, together with Strang's answer thereto, are printed in the *Northern Islander*, June 30, 1853. See also Strang's letter in New York *Tribune*, July 2, 1853.

At Pine River had assembled, as early as the summer of 1852, a considerable group of fishermen, who, at least in the eyes of the Mormons, constituted a settlement of outlaws. In the autumn of 1852 a Mormon officer from Beaver Island called at Pine River in search of some men whom he had warrants to arrest on the charge of stealing. "Almost the entire population" fled to the woods upon his approach. "The Pine River Settlement," commented the *Northern Islander*,* "is little else than a band of vagabonds and thieves, and the sight of an officer of the law sets them all in a twitter." It drew consolation from the fact that lack of provisions would compel the fishermen to scatter on the approach of winter, and the improbability that they would ever reassemble.

Contrary to this pious hope, the summer of 1853 found the fishermen assembled at Pine River in greater numbers than before, and animated by a common determination to resist the authorities of Emmet County.† The issue came on July 12, when the Sheriff of the county set out from Saint

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* Issue of November 11, 1852.

† Aside from the liquor issue, which has already been dwelt upon, Strang ascribed to the fishermen two additional grounds for their attitude of opposition to the authorities. One was the desire to escape taxation; in this connection he pointed out that their appeal to Mackinac for aid in resisting the Mormons was made immediately after Supervisor Cole had visited them on the mission of making the assessment for purposes of taxation. The other represented that the politicians of Mackinac, foreseeing that the Mormons of Emmet County would claim a fair share of the offices, now held chiefly by gentiles, fomented the opposition in order, by discrediting the Mormons, to retain for themselves an undue share of the patronage. *Northern Islander*, June 30, 1853. The ill feeling of the fishermen toward Beaver Island was doubtless intensified by the fact that to Pine River had

James for Pine River to summon certain of the residents there whose names had been drawn for jury duty in the circuit court at Saint James the following week.* With the Sheriff was a boat's crew of five men. Stopping at Galilee (at the south end of the island), he learned that fresh threats had been made at Pine River to kill any man who atempted to serve any kind of process there. Accordingly he took along from here another boat and crew, all unarmed, thinking, if the Mormon narrative may be credited, that the presence of so large a number of witnesses would prevent any act of violence until he should have had time to explain the peaceful character of his business, when no further objection would be made. It would seem that a serious error of judgment was committed by the Sheriff in the management of the business; for if he went unarmed, with no thought of employing force, even in self-defense, fourteen men were too many to take along; if he went prepared for trouble, fourteen men, even though well armed, were all too few, since the settlement contained five times this number, and the only possiblility of retreat was across the open lake, a distance of many miles.

Gentile and Mormon narratives agree in at least one

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come several renegade Mormons and a number of men who had been driven away from the Beavers for criminal conduct. A diverting account of the career of villainy of one of these men, "Dave" Moon, is given by Strang in *ibid.*, October 18, 1855.

* As usual, the Mormon account of the affair differs widely from the gentile narrative. The former is contained in an extra edition of the *Northern Islander*, issued July 14, 1853. The gentile point of view is presented in the narrative of Ludlow P. Hill, a renegade Mormon, printed by Legler, *A Moses of the Mormons*, pp. 153–163; and in Elizabeth Whitney Williams, *A Child of the Sea; and Life among the Mormons* (Harbor Springs, 1905), pp. 148–154. I have followed the Mormon narrative in the main, as evidently far superior as to accuracy, to the others. The story of Captain Stone of the bark *Morgan*, who witnessed the conclusion of the fight, is printed by Legler, *op. cit.*, pp. 165–168.

respect—that the denizens of Pine River were expecting trouble, and were prepared to meet it. The Sheriff's party reached the river mouth about two o'clock in the afternoon. As they approached the landing, armed men could be seen running about, and guns were heard, fired apparently by way of signals. The Mormons landed on a narrow beach, under a bluff which was covered with a growth of timber and bushes. The Sheriff quickly explained his mission, and in less than half an hour his party was preparing to embark for the return voyage to Saint James. Meanwhile, armed men had been gathering on the bluff, and a party of thirty or more had filed down a narrow path to the beach and stationed themselves close to the boats. A considerable surf was breaking on the shore, and it was difficult to get the boats off. They had just been launched, and the last man was climbing in, when a murderous fire from both beach and bluff was poured upon them. In view of the closeness of the assailants to their victims, one must either suppose the fishermen to have been marvelously poor marksmen, or accept the Mormon theory that the escape alive of any of the Saints afforded "an extraordinary instance of the care of God for his creatures." As it was, six of the fourteen Mormons were shot, all of them at the beginning of the attack, while the boats were pushing off.

Before these men lay twenty-five miles of open water. Behind them, in hot pursuit, came three boatloads of fishermen, the largest manned by twenty-five men. For ten miles the Mormons, aided by a light wind, kept beyond musket range of their pursuers. Then, the wind dying down, the latter drew nearer and opened fire on the laboring boats. These were riddled with bullets and it seemed likely the occupants would all be slain, when the bark *Morgan*, bound from Buffalo to Chicago, came in sight, and in response to

THE WATER FRONT AT CHARLEVOIX

The harbor entrance, where the battle began, is marked by the water tower.

the frantic appeals of the Mormons took them all on board. The pursuers thereupon gave over the chase and returned to Pine River. The wounds of the men who had been shot were given some attention by Captain Stone, and when darkness fell the Mormons entered their boats and returned to Galilee. Although the target of several hundred shots, many of them fired at a range of only a few yards, not a single man was killed.

Although first honors in this murderous affray* rested with the fishermen, their triumph was short-lived.

> A large number of the attacking party were recognized [said the *Islander* extra the following day] and measures are being taken to bring them to justice. There would be no difficulty in fitting out a party from here who would make Pine River settlement as bare as the palm of a man's hand; but the moral effect of sending a half dozen to State Prison is worth more than the death of them all. Legal remedies are better than violent ones.

Whether or no a copy of the *Northern Islander* extra was carried to the fishermen we do not know; but when, a week later, a posse came from Saint James to make arrests, not a soul was to be found. The "seventy resolute men" who but a few weeks before had published to the world their determination to take the law into their own hands had vanished. Two years later the Saints held a conference on Holy Island in Pine Lake, whose name had by now been metamorphosed into "Lake Mormon." At its close the worshipers went together to the mouth of Pine River and there erected a gallows on which they hung in effigy the men who had made the assault upon their compatriots on that July afternoon of 1853.† Six months later, correcting a report that the gallows had been cut down, the *Northern Islander* observed that

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* Particularly heinous does it appear in the light of the Mormon statement that the firing was begun only after three men had visited the boats and reported to their fellows that the Mormons had no guns.

† *Northern Islander*, July 19, 1855.

> it stands now, where it is likely to stand for fifty years to come, and where the rough stones piled around it are the enduring monument of the deed of blood and murder there committed the thirteenth of June [July], 1853.*

The permanent settlement of the Pine Lake region dates from the year following the dispersal of the fishermen. Before the actual settlement it had been erroneously supposed that Pine River afforded a valuable site for water power development. The busy brain of Prophet Strang had already marked out this region as a suitable one for Mormon exploitation, and while at Lansing attending his first legislative session he had procured a plat from the land office and marked on it the more desirable tracts of land to preëmpt. In this he was outwitted by some speculators, however, who abstracted the plat from his private papers, and hurrying to the land office, entered for their own benefit the tracts he had marked on it.† They then proposed to sell to Strang one-third of the land entered, at five times the cost of the whole. He ignored this proposition, and before long John S. Dixon, buying of these speculators, located at the mouth of Pine River. About the same time a few Mormons settled in the vicinity, adjoining Pine Lake, and between the members of this tiny group of Saints and gentiles promptly developed a state of antipathy and discord similar to that existing on a larger scale between Mackinac and the Beaver Islands. In the gentile press of the state appeared lurid stories of Mormon outrages committed, or about to be committed, upon Dixon. These Strang answered with circumstantial denials in the *Islander*, and added to the controversy the interesting suggestion that the speculators who had originally sought to outwit and hold him up were now instigating these stories in order to exert pressure upon the Mormons to buy them out as the price of peace.*

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* *Northern Islander*, December 6, 1855.

† *Ibid.*

Mormon plans for the settlement of the Pine Lake territory were largely held in abeyance during 1853 by reason of the hostilities with the fishermen and the citizens of Mackinac. With the spring of 1854, however, the gentile menace in this quarter having been dissipated, the Islanders again turned their attention to the exploitation of the country surrounding "Lake Mormon." Strang had long urged his people to render themselves economically self-sufficing by developing farms enough to raise on the Beaver Islands sufficient food to support the population. He now pointed out† that the chief value of the Pine River region was agricultural, and that it offered the best location for farming to be found in this section of the state. The proper situations for settlement were several miles inland, but there was good connection by water with the outside world. If "the brethren" would go in early this season they would find the country unoccupied, and would encounter no danger of gentile interruption. How many actually responded to this appeal is not now in evidence. A census of Emmet County taken near the close of 1854 showed 1,706 settlers in Charlevoix Township.‡ Evidently the great majority of these were Indians; but of the white population, the Mormons apparently constituted the majority. Mormon optimism foresaw a much larger population settled here in the near future. In November, 1854, the *Islander*,§ denouncing the gentile project to dismember Emmet County by dividing the mainland portion between Cheboygan and Grand Traverse, stated that even though the two counties to be benefited should succeed in the plot they would find themselves no better off; for "before another election our settlements on that east shore will be large enough to control the politics of both Cheboygan and Grand Traverse. And having the power, under such circumstances we should not fail to use it."

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* *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.*, April 13, 1854.

‡ *Ibid.*, November 2, 1854. Emmet County contained three townships; two, Peaine and Galilee, comprised the Beaver Islands; Charlevoix Township was the mainland portion of the county.

§ Issue of November 2, 1854.

In the spring of 1855 the Prophet himself engaged upon an extensive exploration of the Lake Mormon country, and found it to be "one of the finest for agricultural purposes" he had ever seen.* In connection with the annual general conference of the Church held at Saint James in early July, it was this year announced that one would be held at Holy Island in Lake Mormon, July 15, for the purpose of returning thanks to God "for averting the calamities of civil war, with which we were lately threatened, and giving us a peaceful deliverance from the machinations of powerful foes."† Over fifty persons went over from the Beavers in fishing boats to swell the attendance of the mainland settlers at this gathering. The services consisted of a relation of the persecutions suffered by the Mormons, and especially of the efforts to dispossess them of this region, followed by a solemn thanksgiving and praise to God for their deliverance from these troubles.‡ Before dispersing, all hands united in erecting on Holy Island the body of a synagogue, "a block house of excellent workmanship," for future worship. In the autumn it was reported that three boats were employed between the Beavers and Lake Mormon, transporting the steady emigration which had set in for the latter place.* Measures were being entertained for the organization of several new townships around the lake, and the Mormon immigration was already crossing the Emmet County line into Antrim County, while arrangements were on foot to make a settlement in Otsego, which was at this time without an inhabitant.

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* *Northern Islander*, June 14, 1855.

† *Ibid.*, June 21, 1855. The threat of civil war had been made by the Pontiac *Gazette*. Long articles on the subject are printed in the *Islander* for June 14 and July 19, 1855.

‡ *Ibid.*, July 19, 1855. It was at the conclusion of this service that those in attendance went down to the mouth of Pine River and there erected the gallows in memory of the battle here two years before.

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* *Ibid.*, September 20 and October 18, 1855.

CHAPTER X

The Downfall of the Kingdom

WITH the developments recounted at the close of the preceding chapter we reach the zenith of Strang's prophetic and royal *régime.* For ten years as a Prophet and more than five years as Prophet and King he had successfully outridden every storm which had risen to blast his designs and cut short his career. Politically, he had gained a strategic position in the state of Michigan, and was now dreaming of entering Congress* and even of dictating the issue of the coming presidential election. Economically, the Mormon King felt strong enough to declare trade boycotts against Mackinac and Detroit and to threaten Buffalo with similar treatment unless the residents of that city should manifest a becoming attitude in their treatment of the Mormons.† Apparently he could at last bid defiance to all gentile opposition.

Notwithstanding the seeming success which had been achieved, the Kingdom contained within itself the seeds of dissolution. The autocratic rule which Strang had established at length bred a disaffection which eventuated in his assassination at the hands of a group of his own followers; and these same men took advantage of the heritage of gentile hatred which the years had developed to bring down upon Strang's bewildered followers a destroying mob which completed the destruction of the Kingdom of God which had been so hopefully initiated on that July day of the year 1850.

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* *Northern Islander,* July 19, 1855.

† *Ibid.,* August 24 and September 13, 1855.

One of the leading Mormons at Saint James was Dr. Hezekiah D. McCulloch, formerly of Baltimore, who had been converted to the Strangite doctrine and had "gathered" to the islands about the time of the establishment of the Kingdom. His education, ability, and possession of property enabled him speedily to attain a leading position in the councils of the King, and for several years he bore a prominent share in the activities which centered at the Beaver Islands.* He was made a judge of the highest tribunal of the Church, and a member of the King's confidential council. While Peaine Township was attached to Mackinac County he was elected to the office of coroner, and on the organization of Emmet County he became clerk and register of deeds. But he was addicted to drink, and persisted in scandalizing the Mormon cause by publicly drinking at the bars of vessels which touched at Saint James. For this he was rebuked, and the project of sending him to the State Legislature at the expiration of Strang's first term was abandoned. Another set of complaints charged him with dishonest business practices. Gradually the breach between him and the Saints widened, until from a leading councilor of the Church he became its avowed enemy. If Strang's story of the trouble may be credited, McCulloch developed at this juncture a decidedly small, not to say contemptible, spirit. While taking advantage of his church membership to collect his debts in the ecclesiastical courts, he refused to submit to their jurisdiction in cases where injured Saints sought to prosecute him. He also refused to turn over the records of his county office to his successor, and by such acts as suppressing the public records of land titles, strove to create as much trouble for his former compatriots as possible.

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* A long and somewhat pathetic account of McCulloch's relations with the Mormons was published by Strang in the *Islander* for June 19, 1856.

We have dwelt somewhat at length upon the case of McCulloch, for he was the real assassin of Strang. Although others' hands fired the guns which slew him, it was the vengeful brain of Doctor McCulloch which conceived the plot and inspired the instruments who executed it. Those instruments had, of course, grievances of their own, which found their common origin in the character of the Mormon administration of affairs on the islands. Strang's authority over his followers proceeded, as we have already seen, from two distinct sources: for the governance of the faithful in their relations with one another, his position as head of the ecclesiastical theocracy to which they belonged was all-sufficient; for their government in such matters as they found themselves involved with gentiles, his control over the local organs of the civil government could be invoked whenever the occasion should arise for doing so. The church law differed from the civil law in numerous respects. This occasioned no difficulty as long as the followers of Strang submitted with cheerfulness to the arbitrament of the former; but when they opposed its administration a situation pregnant with potential discord presented itself, and the church authorities (which, practically speaking, meant the King) must either forego the application of the church law or, persisting, commit acts unwarranted from the point of view of the civil law. If the recalcitrant Saint chose to withdraw from the Kingdom and resume his life in the outside world he might, indeed, do so, but only at the penalty of forfeiting any real estate he might have acquired, since the Law of the Lord gave to his Prophet James complete control over this class of property.

Loyal adherents, no less than gentile enemies, agree that

Strang was an inflexible ruler. At Voree he did not essay the rôle of temporal ruler, and no occasion arose, therefore, for discord with respect to such matters; but in the ecclesiastical realm there was one unceasing round of excommunications, and these were explained by the church organ itself on the ground that "Mordecai now sits in the king's gate"—in other words, the Prophet was inflexible in enforcing the church law upon those who might transgress it. With the establishment at Beaver Island of a theocratic kingdom Strang assumed the rôle of a temporal ruler, and coincident therewith bitter criticism arose over the enforcement of the authority he had assumed.

The unsavory case of George J. Adams, affords as good an illustration as any of the nature of the difficulty thus encountered. Strang charged that the woman Adams had brought to the islands was a prostitute. To Mormons, sexual irregularity is peculiarly heinous, and the authorities undertook to drive "Mrs. Adams" from the community. One may sympathize with their desire, without conceding the legal authority of the King to have her ridden "around the Bay on a black-horned buck, with her face backwards and the boys to hoot at her." The charge that he threatened to do this may have been an invention of Adams,* and in the absence of any specific admission by Strang, we are unable to determine the truth of this particular matter. It is freely admitted, however, that the King resorted to the infliction of far more severe punishments on other occasions, unsanctioned by state law. As early as January, 1851, a correspondent of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, who had roused the wrath of the Prophet for sending to that paper an article about alleged Mormon misdeeds, was publicly promised, if he would "walk up within the dominion of the 'Mormon king,' a good horsewhipping, administered according to Mormon law, in the presence of a multitude of witnesses."*

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* See the *Northern Islander*, December 12, 1850, for the testimony on this subject.

Presumably the correspondent did not make haste to accept this invitation, but the giving of it, publicly, is indicative of the existence thus early in the history of the Kingdom, of a system of enforcing church decrees which was unknown to the law of the land. How often the practice was invoked we have no means of knowing, since ordinarily it would be kept out of the church paper, and no record be made of it. The crime of adultery was, to the Mormons, one of the gravest of human offenses, and their law made it punishable with death; "and except for the civil authority [we] would not hesitate a moment in inflicting the penalty," declared Strang's official organ.† Two cases of adultery had occurred on the islands up to this time (March, 1856) and in both the offending man was "subjected to the most terrible personal chastisement, thankful to escape with life." What degree of severity this punishment involved may be inferred to some extent from the report in the spring of 1856 of another offender who for "lying, tale-bearing, and endeavoring to incite to mischief and crime," was given, after a hearing, thirty-nine lashes with birch rods.‡

The old proverb, *cherchez la femme*, finds fresh illustration in this general connection. The Law of the Lord devotes a chapter, among other things, to the subject of "apparel and ornaments." "Ye shall not clothe yourselves after the manner of the follies of other men," it begins, "but after the manner that is seemly and convenient, shall ye clothe yourselves." There follows a disquisition by the Prophet upon the follies perpetrated in the name of fashion. What might constitute "seemly and convenient" was left to the Prophet to expound. In this, as in many other matters, his action was well in advance of the age. He proceeded to prohibit "every form of dress which pinches or compresses the body or limbs"; aside from such styles, "objectionable because they injure health, shorten life, and produce hereditary diseases and weakness," he inveighed against a "numerous class of fashions" which were less gravely objectionable; this included bell-crowned hats, enormous sleeves, hoop skirts, and other monstrosities of apparel with which our grandmothers were wont to afflict themselves. On the constructive side, he prescribed for women a short skirt with pantalet trousers. A capable observer who lived on Beaver Island from 1852 to 1856 testifies that the Mormon women genuinely liked this style of dress and discarded it "with many a regret" when compelled thereto in order to avoid impertinent observations among gentiles.* But a few, at least, of Strang's female followers objected to the uniform thus imposed upon them, and in the *Islander* of May 1, 1856, one such woman is held up to public scorn for her wilful course.† Whether this woman was Mrs. Thomas Bedford is not clear, but we have the information from several sources that Bedford encouraged his wife in her refusal to wear the dress prescribed by the Prophet, thereby incurring the condemnation of the latter. Another backsliding Mormon, between whom and King Strang a feeling of bitterness developed, was Alexander Wentworth. One of these men had been severely whipped; rightly enough, he ascribed the responsibility for his punishment to Strang, and conceived the idea of revenging himself upon the Mormon King.*

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* *Northern Islander*, January 9, 1851.

† *Ibid.*, March 13, 1856.

‡ *Ibid.*, April 3, 1856.

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* Letter of Wingfield Watson to H. A. Chaney, August 15, 1877, preserved in Michigan State Library.

† Pillorying his opponents in the press was a confirmed habit of the Prophet. In the present case it was related that the lady (unnamed) three years before stole a dress pattern from Elder Bacon, for which she promised restitution, but had never made it; and that six months prior to this offense she had been caught in the act of adultery, and her paramour publicly flogged for the offense.

Bedford and Wentworth seem to have lacked the enterprise and courage unaided to compass the King's murder, but the estrangement of Doctor McCulloch brought to the little group of malcontents the requisite brain and resolution to bring the thing to pass. To these conspirators was added, in the spring of 1856, another precious character, in the person of "Doctor" Atkyn. What he was "doctor" of is not now in evidence, but he had paid various visits to Saint James from 1850 on, coming finally, in the autumn of 1855, to open a daguerreotype gallery. In the last weekly issue of the *Islander* ever published, occurs a two-column account of Atkyn's career, which presents him as a cheap adventurer who sought, whether by fair means or foul, to sponge a living off the simple-minded Saints. Having run his course at the islands, and being hopelessly in debt, he coolly proposed, unless they should pay his bills, to resort to a program of blackmail, and as evidence of his ability along this line, exhibited a specimen of lampooning handbill he had gotten out against certain reputable citizens of Council Bluffs. They did not comply, and Atkyn proceeded to execute his threat by visiting Detroit, Lansing, and other points, "peregrinating the country, endeavoring to slander the Mormons and sponge his living."

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* On the question of Strang's personal responsibility for the whipping, Wingfield Watson stated to the writer (interview of December 10–11, 1918) that he remembered hearing the Prophet say, when the matter was under discussion, "Whatever you do, let it be done quickly." On the ground that Strang did not positively order the whipping, but was merely cognizant of the plan to inflict it. Watson inclined to exculpate him from responsibility for the act. Having in mind Strang's position of dominance over his followers, it seems clear to the writer that he must bear the responsibility for it.

Thomas Bedford had been a fisherman, who married a Mormon woman and joined the Church, but never became a "strong professor." Mrs. Wing stated to the writer that he and David Brown were partners in the fishing industry. One day Brown came home and surprised Bedford and his wife in the act of adultery. For this, Brown and some others gave Bedford a whipping. Alexander Wentworth was a young man and something of a dandy. He married a daughter of Frank Johnson, partner of Dr. H. D. McCulloch. Thus Wentworth, aside from any independent grievance of his own against Strang, was closely connected with the firm which provided the forefront of the opposition to the Prophet. Interview with Zenas Wright, May 25, 1920.

There were other malcontents, apparently, but these four men seem to have been the ringleaders in the enterprise to overthrow Strang. Never was an assassination plot gone about more publicly, and the failure of Strang to take effective measures to counteract it seems particularly strange in view of his resourceful character and his oft-repeated public defiance of his enemies. The last few issues of the *Islander* teem with notices of the quarrel and of some impending mischief. "Two doctors* left here yesterday," notes the official organ of May 22, "and today two or three ignorant persons say they are on an errand of mischief." Although the *Islander* made light of this suggestion, ridiculing the idea that a new persecution could be gotten up, the issue of four weeks later carried a seven and one-half column "Apology for the Mormons," in which the Prophet bade defiance anew to all his enemies.

> We laugh in bitter scorn at all these threats [he concluded] and we tell these wolf hounds, marshal your myrmidons and send them along to make a spoil of beauty and booty as soon as you please. We bid them a bloody welcome to hospitable graves; over which, each year, we will pile stones, with a muttered curse, against the day of the resurrection of damnation.
>
> We will neither purchase temporary peace and future calamities by dishonorable trafficing with political jugglers, nor will we yield our homes to enemies. If we live, here will we live. If we die, here

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* The allusion is to McCulloch and Atkyn.

will we die, and here shall our bones be buried, expecting in the resurrection of the just to possess the land forever, and dwell with the righteous during the lifetime of the eternal.

These were brave words, but the sequel soon showed that the Mormons were not prepared to back them up with deeds. Doctor McCulloch, on his mission of stirring up vengeance, had succeeded in persuading the captain of the U.S. steamer *Michigan* to visit Saint James in furtherance of his plot.* Returning to Saint James on the *Michigan*, McCulloch made over his property to one of her officers, to prevent the Saints from enforcing their claims against him.†

McCulloch brought home several pistols [records Warren Post, church historian and one of the twelve apostles] which he gave to his clique that they might become expert marksmen. It so happened that after several days practice in shooting at targets the iron steamer‡ came again into the Bay. Then was the time for their hellish plot to be executed; the King must be slain, and some of the principal men arrested if they could be found. McCulloch had given in the names of the chief men of the Island, for the purpose of having them arrested, that if possible there might be a complete overthrow of the Kingdom.

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* What arrangement McCulloch made with this federal official or what justification the latter had for his course, is far from clear. One hesitates, in the absence of specific evidence, to charge a responsible official with prostituting an agency of the United States government to the furtherance of a private plot of assassination against one of its citizens; but the course of the commander of the *Michigan* before and after the assassination lends support to such a theory.

† Statements of Warren Post, church historian, in his MS Apostolic Testimony of Warren Post, p. 21. This document is in the library of the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints at Lamoni, Iowa. There are several accounts of the killing of Strang; the present narrative is based chiefly on the Post manuscript, the Daily *Northern Islander* for June 20, 1856, and information received from Wingfield Watson in personal interviews. Watson was working a few rods from the dock at the time of the assassination; he heard the guns fired, and joined the crowd which gathered about Strang a few minutes after the shooting.

‡ The *Michigan* was the first iron vessel built for the U.S. navy; hence the descriptive allusion. The ship was constructed in sections at Pittsburgh and these were conveyed to Erie, where the boat was completed and launched in 1844. For three-quarters of a century the *Michigan* was employed in the government service and no vessel on the upper lakes has had a more interesting history. In June, 1905, the ship was given a new name, and as the *Wolverine* served for many years as a training ship for the Michigan naval militia. In recent years the boat was retired from active service and an order issued for her destruction. Like the more famous *Constitution*, however, popular sentiment protested against the measure,

The *Michigan* put in at the dock of Johnson and McCulloch, lying directly in front of their store, and about seven o'clock in the evening one of the ship's officers was sent to summon Strang to come on board as the captain wished to see him.* The Prophet accordingly started for the boat, "somewhat cast down in mind in relation to what was transpiring around him." As he stepped upon the bridge leading to the pier, Bedford and Wentworth emerged from the store, the former armed with a horse pistol and the latter with a revolver. Coming up behind the Prophet, Wentworth shot him in the head, bringing him to the ground. As he raised his head to see the assassins, who were but an arm's length away, Wentworth fired again, shooting him in the face below the right eye. He rolled partly over, apparently stunned by the second shot, when Bedford discharged the horse pistol into his back. The murderer concluded his share of the assault by beating the helpless man over the head and face with the pistol. The two men then rushed on board the steamer and begged protection of her officers, which was readily granted. The assault took place in full view of several men at Johnson and McCulloch's store, and of a number of the officers and crew on the boat, none of whom made any effort to interfere. Loyal Saints quickly gathered,

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and the city of Erie obtained permission from the government to preserve the vessel as a historic memorial. At last report, the *Wolverine* was lying in Erie harbor. For a comprehensive account of the vessel's career, see "The Iron Ship," by the present writer, in *Burton Historical Collection Leaflet*, VII, 17–32.

* This messenger was the pilot, Alexander St. Bernard, and his old-age story of the affair is given in the *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, XVIII, 626–627.

and carried the unconscious King to the house of the Prindle brothers, where the surgeon of the boat came and rendered him some medical attention. Meanwhile, some of the leading Saints held a hasty conference, as a result of which Sheriff Miller that night sent a letter to Captain McBlair requesting him to join the group of Mormon leaders in the printing office to discuss the course to be pursued with reference to Wentworth and Bedford. This the commander of the *Michigan* refused to do, saying the men were in safe custody and would be turned over by him to the civil authorities of Mackinac County. There was, of course, no legal justification for this, since the crime had been committed in the county seat of Emmet County, and the Sheriff of that county was the proper official to assume custody of the criminals. He had, however, neither the physical power nor the legal authority to compel the captain of the *Michigan* to surrender them.* About ten o'clock the following morning the ship departed for Mackinac, having first taken on board all those who were supposed to be implicated in the plot against the King. At Mackinac, Wentworth and Bedford were turned over to Sheriff Granger, who kept them in prison for the space of "about five minutes," after which they were set at liberty and treated as heroes by the townsmen.

With the guiding hand of the Prophet removed, the Mormons at Beaver Island seemed to lose all capacity for intelligent or concerted action. Had Saint James contained a single leader possessed of the capacity of any one of half a dozen or more of those at Nauvoo after the killing of Joseph Smith, the day might still have been saved; but now that the assault which had been so often threatened,

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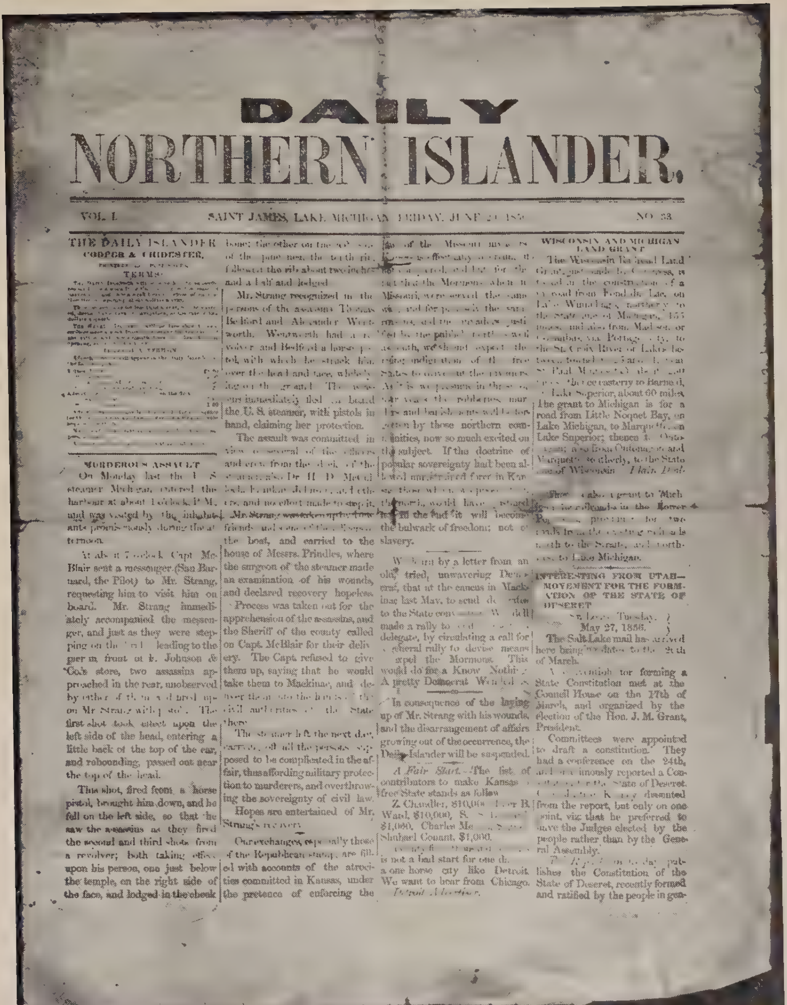
* The want of legal authority of a local officer upon a United States vessel aside, the Sheriff was helpless to enforce his will upon the *Michigan*, which was an armed war vessel and mounted several cannon.



DAILY
NORTHERN ISLANDER.

VOL. I. SAINT JAMES, LAKE MICHIGAN, FRIDAY, JUNE [illegible] NO. 53.

THE DAILY ISLANDER
COOPER & CHIDESTER,
[illegible]
TERMS:

[illegible]

MURDEROUS ASSAULT

On Monday last the U. S. steamer Michigan, entered the harbour at about 1 o'clock P. M., and was visited by the inhabitants promiscuously during the afternoon.

At about 7 o'clock Capt. McBlair sent a messenger (San Barnard, the Pilot) to Mr. Strang, requesting him to visit him on board. Mr. Strang immediately accompanied the messenger, and just as they were stepping on the [illegible] leading to the pier in front of F. Johnson & Co.'s store, two assassins approached in the rear, unobserved by either of them and fired upon Mr Strang with pistols. The first shot took effect upon the left side of the head, entering a little back of the top of the ear, and rebounding, passed out near the top of the head.

This shot, fired from a horse pistol, brought him down, and he fell on the left side, so that he saw the assassins as they fired the second and third shots from a revolver; both taking effect upon his person, one just below the temple, on the right side of the face, and lodged in the cheek bone; the other on the [illegible] side of the spine near the [illegible] rib, followed the rib about two inches and a half and lodged.

Mr. Strang recognized in the persons of the assassins Thomas Bedford and Alexander Wentworth. Wentworth had a revolver and Bedford a horse pistol, with which he struck him over the head and face, while lying on the ground. The assassins immediately fled on board the U. S. steamer, with pistols in hand, claiming her protection.

The assault was committed in view of several of the officers and crew from the deck of the steamer, also Dr. H. D. McCulloch, Franklin Johnson, and others, and no effort made to stop it. Mr. Strang was taken up by [illegible] friends and some of the [illegible] the boat, and carried to the house of Messrs. Prindles, where the surgeon of the steamer made an examination of his wounds, and declared recovery hopeless.

Process was taken out for the apprehension of the assassins, and the Sheriff of the county called on Capt. McBlair for their delivery. The Capt. refused to give them up, saying that he would take them to Mackinac, and deliver them into the hands of the civil authorities of the State there.

The steamer left the next day, carrying off all the persons supposed to be complicated in the affair, thus affording military protection to murderers, and overthrowing the sovereignty of civil law.

Hopes are entertained of Mr. Strang's recovery.

Our exchanges, especially those of the Republican stamp, are filled with accounts of the atrocities committed in Kansas, under the pretence of enforcing the laws of the Missouri [illegible] [illegible] not [illegible] [illegible] the Mormons when in Missouri, were served the same way, and for [illegible] the same [illegible], and the [illegible] justified by the public [illegible] as such, we do not expect the rising indignation of the free States to come to the rescue. [illegible] the robberies, murders and banishments will be forgotten by these northern communities, now so much excited on the subject. If the doctrine of popular sovereignty had been allowed unrestrained force in Kansas [illegible] would have [illegible] the fact it will become the bulwark of freedom; not of slavery.

We learn by a letter from an old, tried, unwavering Democrat, that at the caucus in Mackinac last May, to send delegates to the State convention, [illegible] made a rally to [illegible] delegate, by circulating a call for a general rally to devise means to expel the Mormons. This would do for a Know Nothing. A pretty Democrat Wendell is.

In consequence of the laying up of Mr. Strang with his wounds, and the disarrangement of affairs growing out of the occurrence, the Daily Islander will be suspended.

A Fair Start.—The list of contributors to make Kansas a free State stands as follow: Z. Chandler, $10,000; [illegible] B. Ward, $10,000; S. [illegible] $1,000; Charles Me[illegible]; Shubael Conant, $1,000. [illegible] is not a bad start for one day in a one horse city like Detroit. We want to hear from Chicago.—*Detroit Advertiser.*

WISCONSIN AND MICHIGAN LAND GRANT

The Wisconsin Railroad Land Grant just made by Congress, is to aid in the construction of a railroad from Fond du Lac, on Lake Winnebago, northerly to the State line of Michigan, 155 miles, and also from Madison or Columbus, via Portage City, to the St. Croix River or Lake, between [illegible] St. Paul, Minnesota, [illegible] thence easterly to Bayfield, on Lake Superior, about 60 miles. The grant to Michigan is for a road from Little Noquet Bay, on Lake Michigan, to Marquette, on Lake Superior; thence to Ontonagon; also from Ontonagon and Marquette, southerly, to the State line of Wisconsin.—*Plain Dealer.*

There is also a grant to Michigan for railroads in the Lower Peninsula, providing for two roads from the existing railroads north to the Straits, and [illegible] to Lake Michigan.

INTERESTING FROM UTAH—MOVEMENT FOR THE FORMATION OF THE STATE OF DESERET

St. Louis, Tuesday,
May 27, 1856.

The Salt Lake mail has arrived here bringing dates to the [illegible] of March.

A convention for forming a State Constitution met at the Council House on the 17th of March, and organized by the election of the Hon. J. M. Grant, President.

Committees were appointed to draft a constitution. They had a conference on the 24th, and unanimously reported a Constitution for the State of Deseret. [illegible] Kinney dissented from the report, but only on one point, viz: that he preferred to have the Judges elected by the people rather than by the General Assembly.

The [illegible] published the Constitution of the State of Deseret, recently formed and ratified by the people in gen-

LAST ISSUE OF THE *NORTHERN ISLANDER*

and as often challenged by them, was at hand they cowered like a flock of terror-stricken sheep, submitting without show of opposition to the outrages which quickly followed.* About ten days after the shooting of Strang, the *Michigan* again made the harbor of Saint James, with McCulloch, Wentworth, Bedford, and others of their crowd on board. They immediately precipitated an uproar by undertaking to "arrest" such of the Mormons as were in sight, firing upon Samuel C. Field in this connection, and threatening to take the Prophet, dead or alive; but upon a considerable number of the Saints running together to learn what the confusion was about, the assailants desisted and the steamer set off for Mackinac.

Fearing for the Prophet's safety, after this visitation it was decided to remove him to Voree† and on June 28 he left Saint James on board the propeller *Louisville*. Two days later a number of families departed for Voree and other points on board the *Iowa*. On July 3 came another visitation from Mackinac, led this time by the Sheriff of that county, intent on arresting some of the Mormon leaders; in this he failed, however, for, "directed by the spirit," they had left the island "without the help of mobs." Notice was now given the Saints by the mob that they must leave the island forthwith. There ensued, during the next two or three days, a scene of despoliation and forced deportation such as the world became, unhappily, all too familiar with in the course of the recent World War. Bands of swearing, drunken ruffians went about the island commanding the Mormons to assemble at the harbor for immediate departure, on peril of having their homes burned over their heads. There they were crowded on board steamers, as many as the vessels could carry, and started into exile; up the Lake or down the Lake, it was all the same to the mobbers, who, even before the Saints had left the harbor began the appropriation of their property.

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* Zenas H. Wright, son of Phineas Wright, one of the twelve apostles, was a youth of seventeen at the time of the mobbing. In an interview with the writer (May 25, 1920) he explained the submissiveness of the Mormons to the mobbers as due to the fact that the principal leaders of the former had all fled the islands in the interval between the shooting of Strang and the visitation of the mob. However correct this explanation may be, it does not suffice to obviate the writer's criticism of the quality of leadership displayed at the Beaver Islands. At Nauvoo when the Smiths were killed and the city threatened with destruction Young and the other apostles made haste to return to the post of danger and responsibility.

† Information on these points is drawn chiefly from Warren Post's Apostolic Testimony.

> Almost exactly half a century [writes a modern historian of Michigan]* has gone by since that July day—just after the "glorious Fourth"—when helpless women and innocent children were driven into exile, and it still remains—and we trust it may always remain—the most disgraceful day in Michigan history.

Precise figures as to the number of American citizens who were thus driven into exile are lacking, but it is not difficult to make an approximate estimate. A census taken in the autumn of 1854 disclosed 2,608 residents on Big Beaver Island.† There was undoubtedly a considerable increase during the year 1855, and the gentile population of the island was but a handful. If it be assumed that the latter equaled the increase in population between the autumn of 1854 and the spring of 1856, we arrive at the conclusion that approximately 2,600 people were driven from the island following the shooting of Strang. Confidence that this figure does not err through overstatement is strengthened by the record in a contemporary letter that 490 were taken to Chicago on a single boat;* 300 more had previously departed on the *Iowa*, while the *Louisville* carried "all she could stow" to Detroit, one of the wives of Strang being included in this shipload.

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* Byron M. Cutcheon, *Michigan as a Province, Territory, and State*, III, 308–309.

† *Northern Islander*, November 2, 1854. The population today is but a fraction of what it was before the Mormon dispersion. The census of 1920 showed a total of 779 residents in the two townships into which the island is divided.

For the most part the anguish and hardships endured by these exiles will forever go unrecorded. But the imagination will be assisted in grasping the real significance of the general statements we have made, by the recital of one concrete illustration. Wingfield Watson had come to Beaver Island, from southern Wisconsin, a young married man, in the summer of 1852. The King assigned him an "inheritance" about midway of the island, in the midst of the untamed wilderness, several miles from Saint James. Here a cabin was built, a well dug, and fruit trees set out; in short, with no accumulated capital, by the hardest of manual labor during the ensuing four years the foundations of a modest homestead were reared. While going from his home to Saint James at the time of the mobbing, Watson met two men armed with guns and knives.† They asked where he lived, and he answered, about midway of the island. They responded with curses, ordering him to get his things down to the harbor the following afternoon or his house would be burned over his head. It chanced that Mrs. Watson had just given birth to a child and was in no condition to be moved. The husband represented this situation, and begged that he be permitted to wait until she was in suitable condition to travel, but this plea, which might well have moved the heart of a savage, succeeded only in provoking a fresh outburst of cursing. The next day the husband set forth on foot along the King's Highway, which was but a semblance of a road, winding in and out through the stumps of the cedar swamp, while after him staggered the invalid wife. Arrived at the harbor, this scene confronted them:

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* Letter of Edward Chidester to Warren Post, August 3, 1856, copied by the latter in his Apostolic Testimony.

† Interview with the writer, December 11, 1919; also letter to H. A. Chaney, August 15, 1877, preserved in Michigan State Library.

> Whole groups of Mormons, with their cattle and other moveables might be seen here and there along the beach of the harbor, waiting to be taken off on the first boat in. Soon after a big steamer, the *Keystone State*, arrived and all was hurry and bustle among the mob. They rushed the Mormons aboard, men, women, and children, with oaths and curses. "—— —— you, why don't you go faster?" This last was addressed to my own wife, who had not yet been quite three days confined of our second eldest child, and was scarcely able to walk, while I led the way with the babe in my arms. As many as could be huddled together on that boat were rushed aboard; but when they looked around to see what was going to be done with their cattle and things, they were casting off the lines and putting out.

Arriving at Chicago, this mass of destitute humanity was unloaded on the dock and left to its fate. With little or no means, dazed and discouraged by the treatment they had undergone, adrift in a strange city, men, women, and children sat in the broiling rays of the July sun for nearly a day; the only touch of kindness remembered during all this experience was the act of a profane warehouse keeper, who, seeing the desolate throng,

> cursed the —— —— set of villains that had robbed us and sent us there; and like a man of some patriotism and feeling threw open the warehouse door saying "here ladies and gentlemen, get in here out of the sun and sit down till you can get places to go to."

If a profane warehouseman was thus moved to pity by the chance sight of the victims of the mob, we need not wonder that God looked down from heaven in displeasure at the treatment accorded His chosen people. In times of great public stress people are wont to believe they witness miraculous signs of His intervention. Thus, at the beginning of the World War an angelic presence came to the English army retreating from Mons, to protect it from the pursuing Germans. At Beaver Island one of the Mormon women reported that shortly before sunset on the last night of her stay one of her boys came running in and begged her to come to the door and look at an object in the heavens. Complying, she saw over the island to the west a spindle-shaped body of a beautiful golden color. After a time it began to separate, forming the letters Z I O N of the same beautiful color. Again the picture changed, forming this time the letters J S. Many other persons witnessed the spectacle and it was a common topic of conversation next day on the boat with passengers and crew.*

From the gentile point of view, the Saints had received less than they deserved, and their expulsion was regarded as an act of tardy and inadequate justice. As in wars of greater fame, so in this one, clashing economic interests combined with differences of religion and with simple ignorance to create in the adherents of each party to the conflict an exaggerated conception of their opponents, and the conviction that they themselves were enlisted in a righteous cause. From the circumstance that the Saints were scattered far and wide, while their gentile conquerors remained in possession of the field to pass their version of the conflict down to their descendants, it has come to pass that in all the adjoining region a body of legend which currently passes as unquestioned history has developed, showing the Mormons as piratical criminals and scoundrels, and their gentile opponents as virtuous upholders of law and order.† One of the chief centers of resort of the gentile fishermen of the region was St. Helena Island, and the Newton brothers, who here carried on a general trading business with the fishermen and the Indians, bore a prominent part in the expulsion of the Saints from Beaver Island. Many of the mobbers assembled at St. Helena for the descent upon Saint James, and their part in it has been celebrated in picturesque verse:

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* Letter of Wingfield Watson to H. A. Chaney, August 15, 1877, in Michigan State Library.

† Perhaps the most comprehensive statement of this body of gentile legend is found in Elizabeth Whitney Williams' book, *A Child of the Sea; and Life among the Mormons* (Harbor Springs, Mich., 1905). A convenient

"Then was the little harbor thronged
With fishers and their boats
Canoes and skiffs and sloops they used
'Most every craft that floats.

"Then was there gathering in the dusk,
And hurrying in the dawn,
From Epoufette, from Pointe aux Chênes,
Where'er the news had gone.

"From Manistique to Rabbit's Back,
Seule Choix and far Death's Door,
The Poverty and Summer Isles
Each sent their three or four.

"From Scott's Point and from Mille Coquin
They came to Saint Helene,
'Arch Newton now must lead us on,
We'll sweep the Beavers clean.'"

How effectively they accomplished their purpose we have already seen, and we may now return to the stricken King, whose last view of the beautiful harbor of Saint James was had from the deck of the *Louisville* on June 28. At the time of leaving he requested one of his attendants to "tell the

short *résumé* of the gentile version of the war upon the Mormons is given by Marion M. Davis, "Stories of Saint Helena Island," in *Michigan History Magazine*, X, 411 ff.

brethren in a quiet way" that he thought they would have to draw off before their enemies.* This advice seems not to have been communicated to them, however, and while they vainly awaited some word of guidance from their chief the mob descended upon them. Arrived at Voree, Strang was carried to the home of his parents and there tenderly cared for by a few of his loyal followers until the morning of July 9, when his career on earth came to its end. Present at the deathbed were two of his polygamous wives,† Apostles Hickey and Chidester, and Sheriff George Miller. The Prophet was borne to the grave attended by a handful of Saints and a "respectable congregation" of gentiles. The burial was in the Voree cemetery, but the Saints' title to this land was not yet perfected, and the plot of land including the grave of the King was later secured by a neighboring farmer and converted into a cowyard. At a later time a daughter of Strang caused his body to be removed to the Burlington cemetery, where it rests today in an unmarked grave, its surface as flat as the surrounding prairie, and its location known to but a handful of individuals.‡ *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

With Strang's death died his Church, and for this fact the Prophet himself is chiefly accountable. His claim to the prophetic office was based entirely upon the propositions that God had called Joseph Smith to be his representative upon earth in initiating the "dispensation of the fullness of times"; that Joseph was divinely authorized to name his successor in the prophetic office; and that before his death, by divine guidance he made choice of James J. Strang. On this foundation Strang built his Church, and through a dozen years of reiterated argument he had impressed his followers with the conviction that without a head the Church was unable to function, and that only through him could such a head be named. The taking off of Smith was so sudden that there would have been no cause for remark had he failed to name his successor. Strang lived more than three weeks after he was shot, during most of this time in entire possession of his faculties, and enjoyed the fullest opportunity to make provision against his impending demise. Yet he steadfastly refused to make any, merely advising his followers to look after their families as best they could until they should find out what to do.* Two days before death he said the active part of his life was at an end and the "bearing off" of the Kingdom must now devolve upon others.† The next day he began visibly to fail and Edward Chidester, one of the apostles, asked if the Church were not going to have a successor appointed through him, but he merely answered, "I do not want to talk about it." Within less than twenty-four hours' time he was dead, having wilfully entailed upon his exiled flock the added burden of not knowing where to turn for guidance or leadership.

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* Letter of Edward Chidester, March 15, 1857, copied in Warren Post's Apostolic Testimony, p. 12.

† Betsy McNutt and Phoebe Wright.

‡ After this book was sent to press a collection was started to erect a monument to the Prophet.

Under these circumstances the ecclesiastical organization disintegrated, more slowly but scarcely less surely than had the material settlement of Saint James before the onslaught of the gentile mob. Many went over to the Reorganized Church, the headship of which was at length assumed by young Joseph Smith in 1860. Some became Brighamites;

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* "You inquire what to do. His directions was for every man to take care of his family and do the best he could till he found out what to do. You will understand when you receive this how to act as well as any of us; You have it second hand, I had it from his own mouth." Letter of Edward Chidester to Warren Post, Burlington, July 14, 1856, copied in Post's Apostolic Testimony, p. 13.

† Chidester to Post, August 3, 1856, copied in *ibid.*, pp. 14–19.

while the great majority, probably, abandoned, sooner or later, all pretensions to Mormonism.

Several feeble efforts were made to reconstruct the church organization, but all were brought to naught by the immovable obstacle that nothing could be done without a Prophet, and Strang had died leaving no word as to his successor. On February 10, 1857, five of the apostles assembled "in the wilderness" six miles from Racine and spent the entire winter night praying for direction, with the result that they

> became satisfied that the Twelve could not lead the church without a Prophet; and concluded to take care of ourselves and families; and when occasion offered, minister to the necessities of the Saints, according to our abilities, until we have the word of the Lord to guide us to other duties.*

In December, 1863, 112 followers of Strang assembled in conference at Hixton, Wisconsin, agreed to make an overture to young Joseph Smith to accept their headship on the strength of his having been called thereto by "the Prophet James J. Strang." This was obviously a counsel of despair, not justified by the facts, and now as always during his long career Smith spurned all overtures based on a recognition of Strang's pretensions. About the year 1882 some effort was made to induce Charles J. Strang, eldest son of Elvira Field, to put himself forward as successor to his father, but this project was negatived by his emphatic refusal to lend himself to it.

The last surviving apostle, Lorenzo D. Hickey, died at Coldwater in the year 1900. A week before his demise he urged Wingfield Watson to pay him a visit and, the latter complying, ordained him to the office of presiding high priest.† Watson was converted to the cause in young manhood in 1852, and for over seventy years, until his death in October, 1923, with unwavering steadfastness continued an ardent champion of the prophetic pretensions of Strang. After the death of Hickey he struggled as best he might to play the rôle of leader to the handful who still persisted in the faith. He gathered a number of the church records for preservation, and gained control of a portion of the original site of Voree, holding it in trust for the Church. In October, 1919, a conference was held at Kansas City (the first in twenty years) and a tiny monthly paper was established at that place to serve as the organ of the Church.* Although it has since been suspended, the effort to maintain the church organization is still continued. Mr. Watson, before his death in 1923, ordained Samuel H. Martin of Pueblo, Colorado, as presiding elder to succeed him as head of the Church, and in July, 1928, some forty adherents attended a conference convened on the site of deserted Voree. The little band of zealots still eagerly awaits the fulfilment of the revelation vouchsafed to Joseph Smith in September, 1832, and confirmed by Strang, to the effect that before all who were then living shall have passed away, the erring Saints will be brought back from Utah and elsewhere to the gathering places divinely appointed, while at Independence, Missouri, the city of New Jerusalem will be established and a temple reared to God "in this generation."

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* Warren Post, Apostolic Testimony, p. 27.

† Letter of Watson to the writer, April 14, 1919.

To the simple historian it seems clear that whatever the future may hold in store for Mormonism, the Strangite Church is a thing of the past. The man who brought it into being is the man who sealed its doom. For it was not the act of the gentile mob that broke up the Church—the Saints had triumphed over far greater persecutions in Missouri and Illinois—but the deliberate refusal of Strang to name his successor. He had built up an organization which he, better than any other living man, knew could not persist after his death without a duly ordained successor. When the time arrived for naming one, he refused, like England's Virgin Queen, even to consider the question. Thereby he repaid those who had forsaken homes and friends—oftentimes even wives and children—to follow after him by destroying their dearest interest in life, their Church, which he had made their all. Little wonder that most of them sooner or later, including even the women who had become his wives,* lost faith in the religious pretensions of the man they had followed so blindly. That a few were found whose faith has outlived the buffetings of three-quarters of a century constitutes a striking illustration of the constancy of which mankind is capable.

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* The paper was called *The Latter Day Precept*, edited by John Flanders.

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* Elvira Field had, in later life, no church connection, although she expressed an interest in Christian work. Betsy McNutt became a Reorganized Saint, but before her death abandoned this for another faction of Mormonism. Phoebe Wright, together with all her father's family, was completely disillusioned by the Prophet's downfall, and in later life had nothing to do with Mormonism. Sarah Wright told the writer that she concluded "that my husband was like some other men who sought to build up a kingdom in the midst of a republic," and fearful that her son (born after Strang's death) might some day try to follow in his father's footsteps she made every effort to keep from him all knowledge of Strang's career, and until he was almost grown he did not even know who his father was.

Appendices

I

Sources of Information

IT will be evident from the footnotes of the preceding narrative that he who would study the history of the Kingdom of Saint James must pursue his search for information along bypaths far removed from the usual highways of American literature. It seems desirable, therefore, by way of rounding out the study we have made, to submit a short account of the more important sources, printed, manuscript, and oral, from which the narrative has been derived.

The best general account of Mormonism as a whole is William A. Linn's *The Story of the Mormons from the Date of Their Origin to the Year 1901* (New York, 1902). It contains, however, almost nothing concerning the Strangite phase of Mormonism, probably for the reason that the author found but little upon it and failed, therefore, to appreciate its significance.

The spokesmen of Mormonism, like the Puritan founders of Massachusetts, have been acutely aware of the importance of their doings, and they have produced in print an ever mounting flood of literature concerning them. With a zeal which might well be commended to the older and more orthodox religious sects, the Church of Latter Day Saints has maintained from its infancy an official press and an official church historian to insure the due cultivation of its historical garden. Naturally, this output of literature is partisan and propagandist in character, as is, indeed, practically everything written about the doings of the Mormons. For the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints there is an official history in three volumes by President Joseph Smith and Apostle Heman C. Smith, published by the Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Lamoni, Iowa, 1900–1903), entitled *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1805–1890.* Since the Reorganized Church chiefly sprang from the ruins of the Strangite organization, the official history contains considerable incidental information about the antecedent faction.

For anything approaching a complete record of Strangite Mormonism, however, one must turn to the literary output of this faction of the Church of Latter Day Saints. Unfortunately, due to the circumstances recounted in our narrative, existing examples of this output are so obscure and so rare that only by much painstaking search can one gain access to even a respectable portion of the whole. Probably the present writer has pursued this search more diligently than anyone else, and a *résumé* of the results achieved will constitute an important part of our discussion.

Strang had been an editor before he became a Mormon. He was keenly aware of the value of publicity, and he constantly strove, both by the agency of oral discussion and the use of the printed page, to place his cause before the public in a favorable light. In the infancy of his movement at Voree he proceeded to establish an official organ to which the name Voree *Herald* was given. Issued monthly at first (with some irregularity) and later as a weekly, it ran from January, 1846, until the spring of 1850. The name of the paper was changed once or twice, and there was a succession of nominal editors. The real editor throughout the entire period of its existence was Strang himself. He wrote much of the contents of the *Herald*, and it is probably safe to say that not a line was ever published in it which did not have his tacit, if not active, approval. During most of the period of its existence the Saints were beset by poverty, often by dire poverty; this fact suffices to explain the irregularity of appearance to which the *Herald* was subject.* There is no complete file of it in existence at the present time. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin has a fairly comprehensive file, and a considerable representation is preserved in the New York Public Library.

The successor to the Voree *Herald* was the *Northern Islander*, established by Strang at Saint James in the early winter of 1850–51.† Like the Voree *Herald* in its latter days, the *Northern Islander* was issued as a weekly paper; like its predecessor, too, its appearance was highly irregular. Particularly was publication likely to be suspended during the long winter season, when Beaver Island was isolated from the outside world. In all, ninety issues of the weekly were published in the period from December, 1850, to June, 1856.* On April 1, 1856, publication of a daily edition was begun. The announcement concerning it stated that it would be issued six times a week from the opening to the close of navigation, and once a week while navigation was closed, for the price of six dollars per year. The subscription for the navigation season only was to be two dollars. It seems improbable that Strang really expected this venture to pay financially, or that many paying subscriptions would be received. Thirty-three issues of the daily had been published when Strang's assassination brought Kingdom and paper alike to a sudden end. The *Northern Islander* was the first newspaper published in northern Michigan. Everything considered, it was a surprisingly good paper. For any history of the Strangite Kingdom it is indispensable, but no complete file of it remains in existence and the only considerable run of which the writer has any knowledge is held in private ownership and has never been accessible to the public. The owner, prior to his death in 1923, was Wingfield Watson, and by him the writer was accorded every opportunity to consult the file, including the loan of it for several months.†

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* In the *Northern Islander* of January 24, 1856, Strang gave a comprehensive account of his publications to that date. The early issues of the Voree *Herald* were printed at different places—at Voree, Elkhorn, and Southport, Wisconsin, at Ottawa, Illinois, and at New York City. In all, from Jaunary, 1846 to June 6, 1850, one hundred eighty numbers were issued.

† The last number of the Voree *Herald* was issued June 6, 1850; the first number of the *Northern Islander* was issued on December 12, following.

Both Voree *Herald* and *Northern Islander* were, of course, personal organs of the Prophet, conceived primarily for the promotion of his designs. In the Voree *Herald* much space is devoted to factional disputes between the warring Saints, and practically none to disputes between Saints and gentiles. The *Northern Islander*, on the contrary, is crowded with reports of gentile persecution, accompanied by mouthings of defiance and protestations of Mormon innocence of wrongdoing. Both Voree *Herald* and *Northern Islander* contain numerous official documents, such as revelations, translations of holy records, and reports of church conferences. Certain of these were also printed in pamphlet form. The last issue of the *Daily Northern Islander* (June 20, 1856) carried an advertisement of certain of these publications. The items listed included *The Prophetick Discussion* (canvassing the claims of Strang and Brigham Young), 44 pp., quarto, twenty cents; *The New Dispensation*, by Oliver Cowdery (pages not stated), quarto, twenty cents; and *The Diamond*, 20 pp., octavo, five cents. The advertisement also announced that in May would be published (evidently the advertisement had been running for some time) *Sacred Hymns*, which was to be a small volume of 172 pages, bound in fine morocco, to sell for fifty cents; and The Book of the Law of the Lord, 350 pp., octavo, bound in calf, to sell for two dollars.

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* The first number was published December 12, 1850, twelve numbers appeared in 1851, twenty-six in 1852, three in 1853, twenty-five in 1854, and sixteen in 1855. The issue of January 24, 1856, which summarizes this information, announces that both weekly and daily editions will be published in future. Thereafter seven numbers of the weekly were published, and thirty-three of the daily, the last appearing on June 20, 1856. This issue contains an account of the shooting of Strang, and a short note stating that because of it and of the general confusion of affairs, further publication will be suspended. Of the thirty-three issues published, copies of only one or two are known still to exist.

† Within recent months photostatic copies of the file have been made for the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and for the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library.

Other than this advertisement, the writer has found no clue to the book of hymns, and it seems reasonable to suppose that it still remained unpublished at the time of the dispersion of the Saints. The story of the Book of the Law of the Lord is deserving of separate recital.

If Strang's pretensions be valid this should be the most interesting book ever published in America, if not, indeed, in the world. Other religions have their sacred writings, and the Saints themselves had the Book of Mormon. But these are mere chronicles of past events: the Book of Mormon, for example, is the history of an ancient race; the Bible, in addition to this, is a literary miscellany, the product of many writers over a long period of time. But the Book of the Law of the Lord is God's own framework of government for his people on earth in the present and all future time. From the point of view of our narrative, it was the capstone of Strang's prophetic career, the climax toward which all his labors tended. In theory, if not in actual fact, it made him supreme ruler over all the earth; ironically enough, his Kingdom had vanished into thin air before the completion of publication of the book on which it was based.

From the beginning Strang had encouraged his followers with the promise of holy records, which through divine agency he would disclose to them. A foretaste of these was furnished in the Voree plates, produced from beneath the roots of the oak tree in September, 1845. Precisely when the Law of the Lord took shape in Strang's mind we are unable to say. Mormonism owes its origin to a sacred record, translated by reputedly divine inspiration, and it was only logical that Strang, as Smith's successor, should encourage his followers to expect a continuance of such divine favors through his agency. At Voree, as we have seen, God commanded them to build him a house, wherein he might carry on his work of translating. Despite the backwardness of the Saints the translation evidently went on, for in April, 1849, we find Alden Hale writing to the Prophet concerning plans and procedure for publishing the "new translations."* The letter discusses the procuring of paper, type, and implements for binding the publication, and it affords the first tangible clue that has been found concerning it. Some time later the first edition of the Book of the Law of the Lord was issued, a volume of 80 pages. No copy of this edition is known to be in existence, although Wingfield Watson informed the writer that he had owned one which some time before the conversation he had loaned to a fellow Saint in Tennessee, by whom it had not been returned.

In the absence of any copy it is impossible to say how this first edition of the Law of the Lord differed from its successor.† In one of the earliest issues of the *Northern Islander* (February 6, 1851), Strang printed the ten commandments (later incorporated in the Law of the Lord as Chapter I), and stated by way of introduction that they had been newly translated "from the records which Lehi brought from Jerusalem." Three months later he displayed these "records" to certain of the faithful in attendance upon the April conference at Saint James. Warren Post, one of the Saints thus favored, states that eighteen brass plates, nine inches long and seven and three-eighths inches wide, were shown to him and several others. The witnesses "handled them and saw the engravings thereon, and were satisfied that they were of ancient workmanship; and the real

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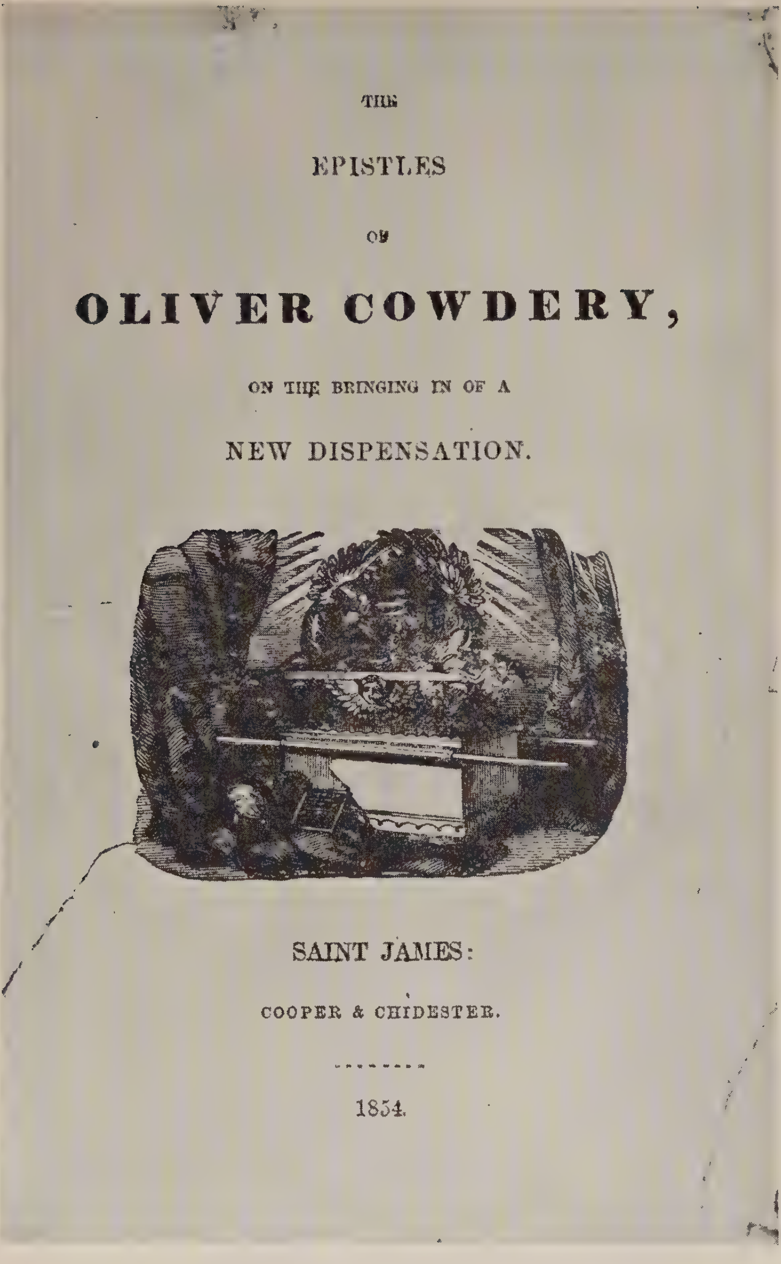
* Strang MSS, letter of Alden Hale to Strang from North Bay, New York, April 13, 1849.

† Charles J. Strang states that the first edition, which he calls a "pamphlet edition," lacked the extensive notes which appear in the second. Explanatory note prefatory to copy of the Book of the Law of the Lord, in the Detroit Public Library.



THE

EPISTLES

OF

OLIVER COWDERY,

ON THE BRINGING IN OF A

NEW DISPENSATION.

SAINT JAMES:

COOPER & CHIDESTER.

1854.

THE EPISTLES OF OLIVER COWDERY

A characteristic production of the *Northern Islander* press.

plates of brass, mentioned in the Book of Mormon, which according to God's promise should in his own time come forth."*

The work of translation must have been often interrupted, for not until January 24, 1856, was publication of the "records" begun in the *Northern Islander*. This time the laws proper were accompanied by an extensive annotated comment, supplied by the Prophet. Elaborate pains had been taken to render the printing of the "translation" accurate, and at the close of each section, or paragraph, a statement of the number of words and letters contained in it was printed. The type of the instalments printed in the *Islander* was saved and used in printing the book, 320 copies of which were struck off. While they still lay unbound in the printing office at Saint James, the mob descended upon the place and made spoil of everything the Saints possessed, and the library and royal press of King Strang suffered the treatment meted out by the Moslems of old to the library of Alexandria.

But if the fleeing Saints were bereft of all other earthly possessions, they took particular pains to preserve the Law of the Lord from destruction. The unbound sheets of the volume were boxed and shipped to Racine, where Benjamin Wright, an apostle in the Church and a father-in-law of the Prophet took charge of them.† From this time on the fate of the volumes becomes progressively more obscure. In December, 1863, the followers of Strang held a church conference at Hixton, Wisconsin, where, among other business, they discussed having "100 or more" copies of the Law of the Lord bound for better preservation. Evidently a large part, if not all, of the edition as printed was still preserved intact. Their further disposition may be surmised from the following facts which the writer has assembled: on January 24, 1893, Wingfield Watson quoted Dr. R. G. Thwaites, Secretary of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, a price of two dollars for bound, or one dollar and fifty cents for unbound copies of the book, which implies that at this time he must have had a number of copies on hand. On January 19, 1920, Rev. A. N. Somers of Westboro, Mass., informed the writer that about the year 1890 (when he was preaching at Black River Falls, Wis.)

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* Warren Post's Personal History (MS), p. 10, and his Apostolic Testimony (MS), p. 58.

† Letter of Edward Chidester to Warren Post, August 3, 1856, copied in the latter's Apostolic Testimony, pp. 15–19.

Strang's daughter, the "Princess Eugenia," had about twenty-five copies of the book, two of which she gave to him, and one of which he in turn gave to the State Historical Society. Charles J. Strang likewise had a number of copies about the same time, and these he had bound, supplying to them a one-page explanatory note of his own, and a title page and a preface, the latter taken from the first edition of the Law of the Lord. Finally, the writer, about half a dozen years since, found a former follower of Strang living in central Wisconsin who had in his possession the unbound sheets of upward of thirty copies of the book. They had been kept in his attic in cardboard shoe boxes over a period of years, during which the mice had discovered them to be a convenient nesting place. From the remains as found, the writer was able to assemble eight or nine practically perfect copies, a couple of which are still in his possession. The others have gone into the hands of collectors.

But one remaining publication of Strang calls for present attention. Fond of debate and a skilled controversialist, he frequently supplied contributions to gentile publications, sometimes over his signature, and at other times with his authorship concealed. From January to April, 1854, he published in the *Northern Islander* a series of articles of a descriptive and historical character, which later in the same year he issued as a paper-covered pamphlet of forty-eight pages, with the formidable title *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac, Including an Account of the Controversy between Mackinac and the Mormons*. The reader quickly perceives that the real purpose of this publication is that suggested by the subtitle. The story of the controversy between the Saints and their enemies is told, of course, from the Mormon point of view. Its character as truthful history has been angrily denounced by various gentile writers. Undoubtedly Strang was a writer not without guile, able on occasion to temper his narration to Saintly needs and sensibilities; but as between it and the usual gentile compound of hatred, fiction, and fable, there can be no doubt that Strang's narrative is much the saner and more reliable. *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac* has been reprinted at least twice; by the St. Ignace *News and Free Press* in 1885, and by Wingfield Watson in 1894.

The story of Strang's Kingdom affords a fertile field for the feature writer and the fictionist, and a considerable body of literature of this kind has been based upon it. Whatever entertainment the reader may derive from these writings, viewed as sober historical contributions they are practically worthless. Commonly they reflect, with more or less fidelity, the compound of legend and prejudice which in the region adjacent to the northern end of Lake Michigan and in certain sections of southern Wisconsin still passes current as veritable history. The character of this prejudice must be understood if one is to comprehend the real character of the narratives based upon it. The feature writer and the fictionist are interested in producing a good story rather than in ascertaining the actual truth about an obscure episode of the past. They willingly reproduce the tales about the Saints that they find in circulation, and by dint of repetition and widespread publication in the metropolitan press a legend has gained current acceptance in the Great Lakes region which bears but faint resemblance to historical truth.*

One narrative of this type merits notice here, not only because it illustrates perfectly the gentile legend in question, but also because it has itself become a chief quarry of material for further sensational narratives. Mrs. Elizabeth Whitney Williams was born on Mackinac Island, apparently about the year 1845. Her father was a boat builder who moved from place to place as circumstances might dictate, and all of the family affiliations were with the gentile fisherman element of Mackinac and vicinity. Mrs. Williams grew up under the influence of this environment; she married the keeper of the lighthouse at Saint James, and after his death by drowning, succeeded him in the service. Her parents lived at Saint James for a short period during her early childhood, and were residing in the Pine River settlement when the affray with the Mormons occurred in the summer of 1853. In this fight her father and her elder half brother participated, and the latter, at least, was an actor in the mobbing of the Mormons after the shooting of Strang in 1856. In 1905, when Mrs. Williams was about sixty years of age, she published at Harbor Springs a semi-autobiographical narrative of 229 pages entitled *A Child of the Sea; and Life Among the Mormons.* Adequately to characterize this volume in brief compass is difficult. That it should reflect the gentile viewpoint toward the Mormons is but a matter of course; but that, purporting to be a narrative based on personal knowledge and experience it should be compounded largely of fancy, fiction, and misinformation, is not. Despite the assurance and pretended first-hand authority with which it speaks, the present writer has derived no help whatever from Mrs. Williams' narrative. Save as it reflects the existing body of gentile myth and tradition concerning the Mormons, it is without historical value.

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* The attitude here noted is effectively characterized by Henry E. Legler, whose investigations were conducted in the middle nineties. In Walworth County, Wisconsin, the Reorganized Saints have (or then had) a humble rural church. Legler reports that when he visited the community he found the gentiles deeply prejudiced against their Mormon neighbors; they related "with bated breath" stories of witchcraft on the part of the Mormon elder. "The narrators evidently believed the stories implicitly, the grotesqueness and impossibility of the performances alleged to have occurred scarcely paralleling in extent the credulity of the country folks."

An amusing manifestation of this local prejudice against the Saints at the time of Legler's visit to the neighborhood is related. In the village of Springfield lived a few Mormons who were in the habit of holding meetings in the schoolhouse, and the ancient rural custom was followed of ringing the school bell to give notice of the meeting. Yielding to gentile pressure, the school trustees had the bell removed. The Mormons thereupon retorted by placarding the village with notices of their meeting on which the words "Curfew shall not ring tonight" were prominently displayed. *Parkman Club Publications*, Nos. 15–16 (Milwaukee, 1897), pp. 1–2.

But one writer, hitherto, has made a serious effort to produce a comprehensive and unbiased account of the Strangite movement. Henry E. Legler, in his later years librarian of the Chicago Public Library, was greatly interested in the study of local history. He was long a resident of Milwaukee, and a member of a small group of Milwaukeeans of like tastes who associated themselves under the name of The Parkman Club. The members prosecuted a number of local historical studies which were subsequently published as the *Parkman Club Publications.* Mr. Legler's contribution to the series was a study of the Strangite movement, published in 1897 as Nos. 15 and 16 of the series under the title, "A Moses of the Mormons." Mr. Legler enjoyed a rare opportunity to make an exhaustive investigation of his subject, since many of the actors in the story were still alive and accessible for interviews. However, he contented himself with a comparatively slight study of 80 pages, only half of which is the author's own contribution. Slight as it is, Mr. Legler's investigation still remains without a competitor, the only one ever made of Strang's prophetic career. It has been several times reprinted, and is frequently utilized by the newspaper feature writers, as the quarry from which their tales are derived.

When the present writer turned his attention to the Strangite movement, about a decade ago, the opportunity to derive information first-hand from those who had participated in it had largely passed. Some, however, were able to afford important assistance, without which the present study could not have been produced. Chief among these was Wingfield Watson, who accepted Strang's leadership in 1852 and for seventy years thereafter, despite almost every discouragement that can be imagined, remained staunchly loyal to the Prophet's claims and teachings. From the death of L. D. Hickey in 1900 until his own demise in 1923, Mr. Watson strove to safeguard the interests of the sadly diminished Church. He accorded the writer frequent interviews, and patiently answered the many questions which were propounded to him. He likewise accorded the freest possible access to his collection of church records. In the summer of 1919 he accompanied the writer on a journey to Beaver Island, his first visit since he had been despoiled of his property and driven into exile sixty-three years before. Mr. Watson was a gentleman in the finest sense, a sincere and kindly man, who devoted his all in life to the pursuit of a vain and impossible ideal. The writer holds him in deepest respect, and gratefully records this tribute to his memory.

Aside from Mr. Watson, a son, a daughter, and a widow of the Prophet have afforded much information and assistance to the author. Charles J. Strang, eldest son of the Prophet and Elvira Field, procured, during his active life, as many of his father's papers as he could obtain, with the intention, apparently, of writing a narrative of his career. When he died, the papers were given to his brother, Clement, who likewise entertained the design of publishing an account of his father's life. When the writer established contact with him and disclosed to him his own project already far advanced, Mr. Strang cheerfully turned the manuscripts over to him and resigned his own design of utilizing them as the basis of a narrative. It should be stated in this connection that neither of the brothers adhered to their father's religion, or desired any publicity for themselves. They were animated, rather, by the laudable motive of defending his memory against prejudiced and untrue attacks. The importance of these manuscripts to the present study will be obvious to everyone who reads it.

Mrs. Sarah Wing, the last surviving wife of Strang, answered numerous inquiries which the writer propounded by letter over a period of two or three years; when it was finally possible to pay her a visit, however, advancing infirmity had rendered her memory so unstable that but little further information could be derived from her. Eugenia, the daughter of Strang and Phoebe Wright, and Zenas Wright, brother of Sarah and cousin of Phoebe Wright, have also favored the writer with important information. Roscoe B. Martin of Forestville, New York, and Charles M. Reed of Sinclairville, both former presidents of the Chautauqua County Historical Society, have supplied the portrait and the life mask of Strang. The portrait is from a daguerreotype owned by Mrs. Eva Allen, a grand niece of the Prophet; the life mask, now in possession of the Chautauqua County Historical Society, was until recently owned by J. S. Fowler of Jamestown, a grand nephew.

It is perhaps unnecessary to add that no one of the many persons from whom information or other assistance has been derived is in any way responsible for the conclusions reached and the opinions ventured by the writer.

II

*The Diary of James J. Strang**

MAY 29th [1831] Today I read seven hours in Volney's Ruins reading more than 360 pages. It is an admirable work and well executed.

July 4th Celebrated the anniversary of our national Independence at Goves. was present: but [arrived] after the oration was delivered. it was said to be smart but badly given. toasts were decent some very good. Mr. Corey, marshal. Dr. Crum president. Dr. Brown speaker.

31st Last night had the heaviest thunder and rain we have had in some time, perhaps four or five years. the cre[e]ks are very high overflowing several acres of land: some damage done.

Our debating school was given up as soon as it went into operation to prevent contention with the prejudiced bigots.

The revival meeting lasted a fortnight or more. Some dozen or twenty were converted, principally small boys and very young ladies. Nearly half have allready returned to their wallowing again.

Unkle S. H. Dillingham visited us lately: we were able to shew him the largest corn in the country though it was planted in June.

Aug. 28th I have been making records of our debating society. Since it was reestablished it has been prosperous. We have had several sharp debates lately, one last evening. The state of Europe is at this time truly precarious. Poland in a dreadful contest for independence. England all in ferment about reform. Belgium in a struggle with foreign ministers and even members of her own congress whether to deliver hers to the (un) holy alliance or not.

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* The manuscript notebook in which the diary was kept has suffered much from misuse, and considerable portions are missing. The greater portion of the volume was owned a few years since by Henry Denio of Lamoni, Iowa, a grandson of Strang, to whom it had come, apparently, from his grandmother, Betsy McNutt. By Mr. Denio the manuscript was loaned to me for the purpose of copying. At a later time, on gaining access to the Strang manuscripts, about a dozen sheets of the original diary were found therein, and the contents of these have been fitted into their appropriate places in the present copy.

Oct. 9th Our debating school is very prosperous though we have but a few speakers. Five is the extent. But we expect more soon.

Mr. Pearce* an excellent speaker and my only rival has gone away. He intends to go on a canal next summer and wishes me to go at $18 per month. Not long since Mr. Pearce wrote to me a poetick letter to which I replied in like manner, but only in criticism. At the same time I wrote a song on a subject similar to his letter, which has since been common singing with the boys. Since that I have written considerable: today I have been writing a letter which was begun friday evening: it is my masterpiece. Last evening I wrote a song of sixteen lines after debating school.

About a week since I wrote to Grand Father, also to Manly. It is wet weather.

Oct. 26th Last night we had a sharp debate on the question is man more inclined to good than evil? I was never before so worried with speaking. I have imbibed a habit of speaking very loud: last night was heard distinctly twenty rods in a house. I had a dispute with Mr. Smith the amount of which is "Shall the accuser prove the accused guilty or shall the accused prove himself innocent?" It arose from the following circumstance: in a debate not long since he accused me of quoting history which I had never read and quoting it falsely. I replied giving him reasons to know I had read it and had quoted it right and chalenged him to his proofs. He very modestly replied to my reasons and give me liberty to prove the accusation false. Last evening I prepared the way for training him and in reply to me he said he had a right to accuse me of what he pleased and the accusation stood good until I proved to the contrary. I shall train him shortly.

Nov. 2d By a singular change of circumstance I am to be teaching school in Randolph† in a few days. I had formerly given up the idea of teaching school at all but I am now very earnestly desired to teach for the people in that place, and as I intend to make serving the people my business through life I will do it now. yet this is not possible to my mind. Last saturday I attended the debating school: the question was "In which is exhibited the greatest curiosity, animate or inanimate life?" The affirmative was ably represented by Messrs. Warren Smith and Slater: on the negative I had the privilege of speaking alone. The question was hotly contested on both sides: decision for the negative. I had formerly spoken on the same question and came off where I went on. I trained Smith a week ago saturday in blank verse, and he bore it patiently. It began as follows

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* Benjamin Perce, who is mentioned in later entries of the diary. In the autumn of 1836 his sister, Mary, became the wife of Strang.

† A village in southwestern Cattaraugus County, some twenty miles southeast of Strang's home.

"To him who rides on slander's foaming steeds
Who loves to charge a friend with basest deeds
Who speaks for naught but wrathful vengeance wrong
Who hopes to rise by slander's blasting tongue"

The whole lingo consisted of sixty lines but part of it was so savage I thought it not prudent to recite it in publick.

Nov. 25th Today I have bought some toys for the school to the amount of $1.20. also a few books; they are—

Book of Nature—Good $1.87½
Lexicon of Useful Knowledge $1.50
American Constitutions $1.25
Life of Napoleon $1.25

And a few school books and others of less consequence. The books I bought for company next winter. Tomorrow I shall start for my school.

Randolph

Nov. 7th 1831 Well I have now set down for one winter; for one winter of hard labour too. I think from the present appearance of weather for it has snowed steadily since I left home, and the snow is here a foot deep and fast falling. I am some tired of wallowing through the mudy snowy roads. but I shall have a resting spell of two days before I begin school.

Nov. 30th Commenced my school today and had but seven scholars. This is but a small part of the forty promised. The snow continues falling.

Dec. 31 I have now taught school five weeks and have thirty-five schollars: this is a little more like doing business. I would not care if there were twice that number every day. The school was quite untrained when I came here: not a single schollar knew his place or duty. but I have succeeded in regulating them and learning them what to do without punishing a single schollar. I have some hope of being able to get along with the school without any considerable difficulty.

I wrote to father two weeks ago and sent for papers. I have not had any news of any consequence since I have been here. I expect some papers from Dr. Simons who has given to me nearly two years.

This is the last day of the year a year somewhat conspicuous for the great events which have happened, if civil revolutions and contests can be called great events. During the year which is about to close there have been insurrections in allmost every country in Europe. Belgium has gained her independence by accepting Leopold for king some of the German states have changed sovereigns: all the rest have been crushed by military force, a fine way to decide the rights of man.

We have had deep snow ever since I have been in this town.

Jan. 1st 1832 Another year has now commenced and I hope it may be a year of greater profit than that which has passed, not that I have reason to despair in looking back on the passed time of my life, but I find my improvements less than what they might have been by better use of the same time. I might also have saved some time without lessening my ease, and an accumulation of gain would add much.

I expect nothing this year more than a gradual change of circumstances. In looking over the evils of life I confess I am some times allmost tired of life. To see men in allmost every station in life seeking to injure each other in every possible manner; perpetually striving with all possible force in matters in which they have no concern; one nation making war upon another merely for conquest, or even military glory; one people propagating its religion by fire and sword; another reviling the first for its cruelty, and yet with the more deadly weapons of calumny and slander in its own cause, persecuting by word and action in common life all who dare to believe a little more or a little less than its own standard; parents teaching their own children to believe certain principles without evidence of their truth, and even that it is blasphemy to ask or wish for it; men acting in disguise in all their intercourse with each other, and this to such an extent that the most intimate friend frequently proves to be in heart a most virulent enemy, professing friendship merely to find an excuse for injuring his fellow; in a word to see the human heart a mere puff of air and at the same time a pit of corruption which neither the waters of Syria or India nor even the blood of "The Son of God" can cleanse it is indeed enough to make one wish himself excluded from the face of man. But this is no painted story nor is one-half of the evil yet told; for man has not only dissembled, deceived, made war without cause, given cause to those who dare not or could not defend their rights, and compelled his fellow to believe without evidence or intuition but he has called the God whom he says delights in goodness and will punish all evil doers to be a witness and a helper in his evil deeds: he has made him a partner in his contentions and his strife, to be the author and the lover of evil: to be changeable minded: to be capable of willing acting and repenting of it: to be effected [with] passions like his own, and indeed he has completely made man in his own image morally and physically and then has declared that God made man in his image. Such is the human heart changeable and polluted in the best of men and in their best times. Among such beings is my lot cast. I, like the rest. I am ashamed of it but it is allmost true, not quite.

Is it possible that anyone should wish to have eminence who believes all this? Yes it's possible: it is true I ask no more than what this life may give—if it will but I tremble when I look forward to future prospects. I am resolved to [devote] my life to the service of mankind.

Jan. 3^d This morning I wrote to my brother by Mr. Smith, sending a poem of forty-eight lines to the Philositorian Society and promising a composition if it would be acceptable. The poem was one which I read to the secretary while there but neglected to leave a copy.

I keep house alone for Mr. Smith this week and it gives me a better chance for study than I could otherwise enjoy. Snow continues falling lightly.

Jan. 7th Mr. Smith has just returned this evening and brought a letter from my oldest sister a composition of hers, some of my papers, and a few newspapers, for all of which I am very thankful.

The papers contain the President's message and the report of the Secretary of War and Postmaster General. The message has the merit of being short, simple and probably correct in general. It exhibits the country in a most prosperous state as regards money affairs; The opinions concerning the Indians is probably correct except as to their right of protection from the United States etc.

On the whole I think "The Hero" will get a pretty good name at his term's end, though he will never be beloved by the people.

Snow is melted some.

Jan. 15th This is the third fair day we have had and it is very pleasant now. This has been a very stormy winter but I have generally felt pleasant amid the contending elements. Mr. Smith*

[*Paragraph of cipher*]

Jan. 22 This evening we have formed a debating society in this town of which there are four members. I drew up the constitution and it was adopted without amendments. They [*cipher*]

My school is now half past and such success as has attended it has not attended any other of which I have heard. I have not yet punished a schollar nor heard a complaint.

[*Paragraph of cipher*]

Old times [*cipher*]

J. J. Strang January 22d, 1832

[*Paragraph of cipher*]

Jan. 23d This day begins the last half of my winter's work and singularly [*2 words of cipher*] the school felt wonderfully [*3 words of cipher*]

Jan. 28th Today I have dismissed my school for want of wood

[*Paragraph of cipher*]

Jan. 29th Today I went to one meeting. I have not attended religious meetings very steadily this winter. though I generally hear one discourse every week and sometimes two or three.

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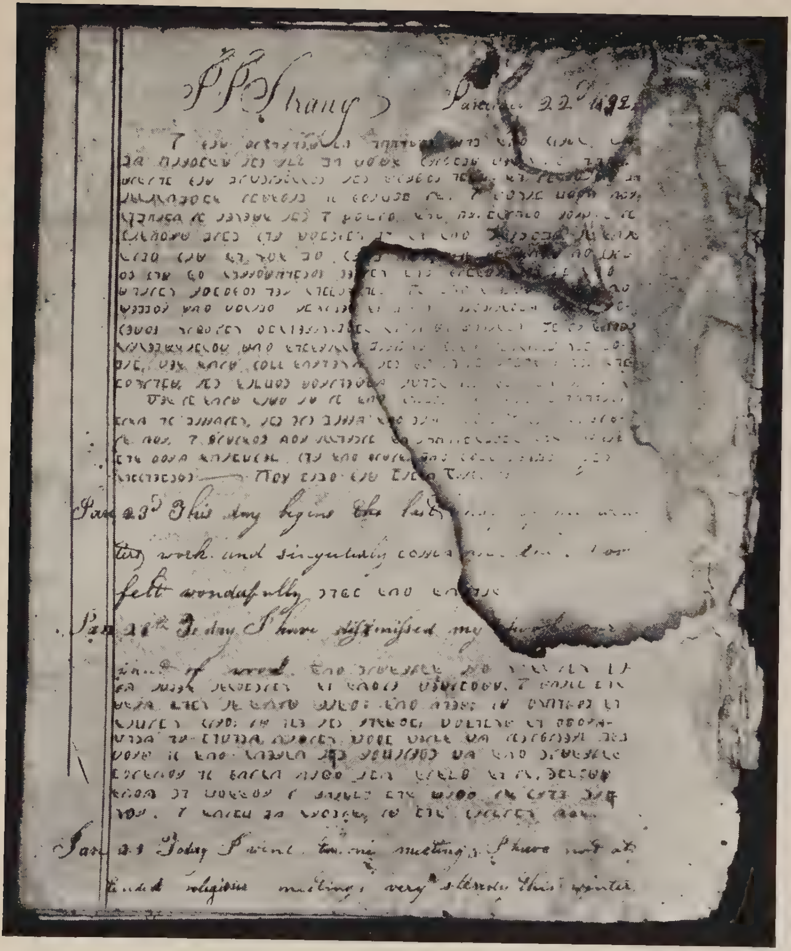
* Entries in cipher occur at frequent intervals throughout the diary. The fact that Strang had evolved (or adopted) at this early date a secret cipher code is not without significance in connection with the consideration of the origin of the plates inscribed with records of reputedly divine origin which are associated with his subsequent career as a prophet.



THE DIARY OF JAMES J. STRANG

The illustration suggests both the physical condition of the diary and the character of its contents.

We, have some reason to fear that our debating society will share a hard fate.

[*About six-sevenths of page of cipher*]

yet Mr. Smith says I tell a falsehood when I say the last year of my life was the happiest and when I say I enjoy more happiness than I endure misery he is nearly out upon me. The difference is he is a restless Christian and I am a cool Philosopher.

Feb. 14th Last evening the young gentlemen in this settlement (Smith's Mills) went up to Rugs Settlement to attend a debate on a chalenge. They had their own question-side, presiding officers, time of meeting, place of meeting, and even did not inform us the question Not satisfied with these advantages they even would not allow us our turn in speaking and then gained the decision by crowding one presiding officer out of the chair and appointing another in his place After the discussion was closed one of the officers vetoed because he advised to decide against them.

Feb. 18 I have been making arrangements for a splendid exhibition at the close of the school year. This evening was appointed for recitation of one piece but the house was crowded with spectators and it was necessary to give way. If scholars do not care enough for instruction or spectators for exhibition to mind their own business I can [use the?] time and money for other purposes.

Feb. 19th Next week closes my school. I know not what business I shall then engage in. Day before yesterday I mailed a letter to uncle John W. James offering to go to New York as clerk for him.

Feb. 19 Today I have not felt so smart as sometimes on account of a light cold. Let it go off as it came! My constitution is growing stronger continually.

Our Debating Society has finally succeeded and has been got thoroughly into operation. We have had three debates, one was a very sharp one, and I had the honor to carry the question allmost single handed. We have another next evening. I shall make a very little preparation for it.

I expect to dismiss my school soon and leave the place. The time for which I engaged is not up, but I anticipated such a close from the commencement, for the people want their boys to work in the sap works. I made the bargain with Mr. Draper for when he feels rich he feels very rich.

There is no complaint against me and they offer me a good recommend.

Some young chaps have treated me rather indecently and I would have trained them if they had come in the house but they were wise enough to stay away. They said if I would come out doors they would dress me, but when I went out they kept a proper distance. I wanted to train them in the house but thought it wise not to meddle out of doors. I wrote home a short time since and informed my parents that there was a prospect of my coming sooner than I had expected.

The winter season is now nearly past and I am sorry I have not made more improvement in preparing for my great designs [*1 line of cipher*] but I have,

But yet I feel as if I had gained some.

[*Paragraph of cipher*]

Feb. 21st Today I have dismissed my school and now find myself a little more at liberty. I expect to return home shortly the schollars all felt pretty well and I in respect gave them all handsome little presents.

Feb. 26 I am yet in Randolph though I ought to be at home. I dismissed school last tuesday and since [then have] been at uncle Smith's. I expect to go tomorrow. Two or three of the district are probably glad to have me go but it is for reasons not concerning the school, for they have expressed complete satisfaction and given a recommend. I know of no displeasure except of one solitary schollar and all were very sorry when the school closed. I have not chastised a schollar this winter and yet have been rigorous in the execution of my orders—[*line of cipher*]

I attended the debate last monday; it was very interesting. perhaps more so to me because it was the last which I was to attend [*4 lines of cipher*]

Hanover

March 9th Once more I find myself in my own town and among my own friends and with feelings of real satisfaction I again commence a renewal of my connections.

I arrived in town last monday and have called on most of my friends allready: the town is revolutionized in some respects very much. a dozen or twenty couple married and as many farms near home changed owners.

March 18th I am allready beginning to neglect my diary from over much labour. I have found time to do some writing but have not yet begun the correspondence mentioned above. I expect to commence it today.

[*Paragraph of cipher*]

The debating school in this place is all given up but I mean to revive it soon. There is one established in Forestville.

[*Paragraph of cipher*]

March 21st Birthday I am 19 years old and am yet no more than a common farmer. It is too bad. I ought to have been a member of Assembly or a Brigadier General before this time. If I am ever to rival [*cipher*] which I have [*cipher*].

In the last year I have learned all that I profess to know. That is that I am eager and mankind are frail and I do not half know that: nevertheless I shall act upon it for time to come for my own benefit.

Apr. 22d Time passes on very agreeably but with but little profit. I am at a loss what to do: sometimes I think of going into the service of the fur company: sometimes of studying the law, and sometimes of speculating either in this or some foreign country: [*2 lines of cipher*]

Today our debating school is to be revived but not without opposition for some of the common school district have appointed themselves our conscience keepers but we are not to be driven.

I have not yet begun my correspondence with Mr. Crowley on account of the uncertainty of my remaining in this place.

This day makes just one year since I cut my foot. It is yet weak and caluced but I can outrun any of my fellows.

May 27th [*3 lines of cipher*] It is a difficult business for me, but I wish to try if there is the least chance my mind has allways been filled with dreams of [*3 words of cipher*]

June This is a flying time with me. [*5 lines of cipher*]

July 1st I have neglected my writing to long. Aunt Sally Jones and Clarissa C—— have made us a very good visit. They were well pleased with the place. I returned with them as far as Buffalo; it was the first time I ever visited a city. I and my friends were well pleased with the place: it is in a flourishing condition: the people were taking all possible means to prevent the introduction of the Spasmodic Colera which has for fifteen years been destructive on the eastern continent and has just broke out on this. Jerome son of my friend Dr. Simons is dead having been afflicted with a long and distressing illness, he was a very amiable lad. The Queen Mab and the Age of reason have been my companions of late. Shelley is at least equal to Paine. It was not till very lately that I was able to obtain such books. [*1 line of cipher*]

I have finally concluded to study the law next winter unless I can get better business before that time.

July 5th The American patriot's Sabbath, the anniversary of our national Independence. Thanks to the frailties of King George, but more to the firmness and unyielding patriotism of our own beloved leaders that whilst Greece torn with internal convulsions has permitted foreign autocrats to appoint her a king without asking her council, whilst France is still domineered over by a bourbon tyrant and whilst the liberty of Frenchmen is a thing rather wished for than believed to exist, whilst England trembles and totters to her very foundations with the racking of internal convulsions, whilst Belgium holds her national existence only by the hated will of the tyrants, whilst the death knell of Poland is closing its sound upon our ears, and a dark dismal and bloody cloud hangs over the once beloved republicks of South America, whilst a doleful and horrid darkness overshadows almost all the earth, and the ignorant multitude pay obeisance and adoration to the cruel tyrants that oppress and rob them, we are permitted to enjoy national and civil liberty to be our own governors and legislators and to speak and to think according to our own consciences.

Long may our liberty continue, may bigotry and religion cease to tramel it, may the absolute despotism which superstition has established over the minds of some work its own cure.

The day was appropriately celebrated at Fayette. A procession of about 500 people marched from the village to a grove and heard an oration from Esq. Mullet. Tables were set under bowers and toasts drank and cannon fired. The young people attended a ball from 3 o'clock till sunrise. The bill was $2.75 per couple and amounted to about $100 on the company. This sum was sufficient to procure respectable entertainment for the whole company purchase a handsome library of 100 volumes with the necessary appendages and to make every person present a sharer in the benefits of it.

July 27 From my infancy I have been taught that mankind was totally depraved, and my own observation and experience have demonstrated that the heart of man is an impure fountain from which bitter waters are perpetually flowing. I have long been persuaded that the depravity of man originated in his unnatural habits and when I first made the discovery I firmly believed that I had also found a cure: that if the depravity of man originated in his unnatural habits, a return to those which are natural would effect a cure; that though the cure might be slow yet it would be certain and invariable. All this I still believe, but what are our natural habits?

I have searched and searched in vain. The question is yet unsurmountable, and so far as I know or in all probability ever can know, vice, misery, and wretchedness; gold, monarchy and murder; kings, priests, and parisites are man's perpetual associates. My heart sickens at the thought, and my whole soul shrinks with horror at the idea, and I wish that I had not been born.

[*3 lines of cipher*]

Aug. 5th Some time since took a resolution which I now solemnly confirm to be [*one and one-half lines of cipher*] unless I find better business.

Aug. 21st Today my good parents go to visit brother and fetch home sister. [*Paragraph of cipher*]

23d This commenced the sickest day I ever suffered since my remembrance but now (evening) I am again smart for a sick person: that is I am able to walk about. I was taken with pains, purging and vomiting. Some call it *colera* but I think otherwise.

25th Attend to business as usual but I am weak.

31st Tomorrow the train bands meet: what noble soldiers they are and what an officer I am: that beats my grandmother's relations.

Sept. 16 My head is filled with projects. I propose publishing a literary and scientifick journal and am only waiting for a printer. This is of minor importance and I shall undertake it merely to introduce myself to the publick.

Moreover I hope very soon to form a Literary Association and besides this I shall make an effort for a "mutual instruction military Academy" for young militia officers. By the way I am fourth corporal after having failed of an election to a higher office. The cause of my failure was my refusal to buy men's votes with rum and I am more displeased with that than I should be with a dozen such effects.

Oct. 15th Late in the evening. I have just finished a constitution for a literary society at Forestville. An Academy has lately been established there by Mr. S. a. Hutt.

Allen Smith who married aunt Polly six or seven years ago ha[s] just left the country, I hope forever, he having another wife. I opposed the match with unshaken firmness till opposition was vain. When true to a maxim of mine that it is better to submit to anything than to protract dissension forever I finally gave in my submission, but with a heavy heart and a deep-rooted conviction that she had sold herself to misery. I have neve[r] had occasion to change that opinion. Her days have been spent in care and distress, and her nights in misery and mourning. He deceived her in anything that concerning her happiness, pretending to have a handsome property he proved to be poor pretending to be amiable, kind and affectionate he was disagreeable harsh and relentless. He became a minister of the Baptist denomination, preached in several churches and was very successful; what an argument for infidelity; though he always got in a jumble; and finally when he was found out went away with nearly half his property (except household furniture) leaving Polly with two children in poor health and less property than he received by her—more of this at another time perhaps.

Nov. 11th The commencement of winter the emblem of life's latest stage is close at hand. Reviewing the scenes of the past summer

I have reason to know that I have made some advances towards the accomplishment of my designs but such advances will never answer to the end.

A scientifick and literary society has been opened in Forestville adopting the constitution writen by myself [*four lines of cipher*] There will be but little opposition.

[*1833*]

Jan 1st The New Year begins in total darkness: at the commencement the sun was at antipodes the moon had forgotten to shine on this dark faced globe, and dreary dismal clouds shut out the reflected light of distant frowning planets, while the proud stars at a more respectful distance made us feel their conscious superiority. This is only the work of nature: Nature never works for man alone but keeps her own unvarying course regardless of mens prayers and wishes

It is never to early to begin to do well, nor is it ever late enough to excuse beginning: but yet the first day of the year is an auspicious time for commencing new plans of improvement. Yet our people generally use this day to increase their profligacy (or to make it immeasurable). It is astonishing to observe what waste of time, talent, and money people will make for show on our common holy days. Turkey games occurred yesterday in many places but they are degraded to mer[e] drunken revels instead of being nurseries for marksmen. The young people generally attended balls and as the ground is muddy and the rain falling they have no very pleasant sport in their rides at least.

By careful calculation I am convinced that the expense of balls in this County will not be less than six thousand dollars—not a very small sum to pay for sport of so short continuance.

These are light affairs compared with others in our country and in the eastern world; the whole civilised world is verging to scenes of darkness horror and bloodshed. Disunion with all the horrors of anarchy and civil war are stareing us in the face, while our people are setting by in regardless security confident in the strength of our goverment and believing that our Constitution is an effectual shield against all evils, and an unfailing security of liberty and justice when corruption lurks in midnight darkness and stalks forth at noonday, when the highest officers under our constitution are engaged in the vilest frauds against goverment, and the people will elect to office men who declare themselves only fighting for the spoils of the vanquished Men who know and ought to know that allmost every article of our Constitution has been violated by the highest functionaries of goverment, time and again and with impunity, and that attempts to bring the offenders to justice have been laughed at by the great body of the [nation?] These things have varied as different parties were in power but not for the better. We loose by every chang and are gradually going on from bad to worse. What the end will [be] no one knows but we have reason to anticipate the worst that any visionary has dreamed of or feared.

The politicks of the states south of the Potomack have allways been inclined to disunion and of those east of the Hudson, to consolidation. Those at the south belong to the great republican party and in its early ascendancy gained great influence to the total exclusion of those on the other extremes. Of course the goverment inclined to disunion also, or in other words there was a gradual curtailing of the powers properly belonging to the general goverment. On the total failure of the old federal party and the breaking out of the republican on account of its diversity of interests and lack of opposition, the old leading chiefs of the federal retired and those who were not universally known fell in with the various parties formed of the republicans and thus gained a handsome and growing interest in the affairs of goverment.

The southern politicians viewed these things with disquietude and alarm. They knew full well that they were fast looseing in their portion of representation: every other part of the country increasing in population faster than they, and they knew as well that their statesmen were faster looseing their portion of influence in the national councils. Every means in their power was tried to arrest the course of events but tried in vain. They anticipated failure in those attempts and busied themselves in preparing the public mind for more desperate means when it should be their interest to make a final attempt. In the meantime they were courted by such parties as were corrupt enough to pay them for their assistance and by the Jackson party successfully. Under his administration they gained some of their former influence but his sentiments were not congenial with theirs and as soon as he saw himself strong enough without them and they saw he would never assist them in their ultimate designs both parties gladly denounced the alliance, and the southerners prepared a law for the fatal rupture which must ruin them or the government. The Tariff is the great burden of their complaint and to it they impute all the evils and suffering from slavery luxury and misgovernment—as well as that of producing nothing but what the southwestern planters produce in three times as large quantities with the same labour.

The South Carolinians take the lead in this business and hold that any state has a right to nullify laws made by congress and solemnly declared constitutional by the Supreme Court whenever such state shall deem them unconstitutional. The Legislatures of the southern states in general probably will not concur in this. But it is supposed by those who observe closely that they will generally agree that a state may secede from the Union without incurring the displeasure of the general government or the other states.

As yet but little has been done that wears a permanent character. The Legislature of South Carolina have called a convention to consider the Tarriff laws which convention declared said laws void in that state, commanded the authorities to prevent their execution and imposed a detestable test oath on officers judges and jurors.

some have entertained a hope that the valiance of their proceedings would work a reaction in publick sentiment and perhaps it would in this country where people are a little more considerate but I venture to predict (and with sorrow) that this will not be the case, that there will not be a reaction and that they have taken their ground for success or ruin.

The President, Gen. Jackson, has issued a proclamation informing them of the consequences which must result from such a course and declaring that the laws *shall* be executed and the Union *shall* be preserved. This proclamation is very popular and people generally believe it will put an end to nulification that the tariff will be modified and the South Carolina convention will be recalled and will repeal the odious ordinance of nulification but it will not be so. they will not retreat unless they know their only alternative. Submission or death. Nevertheless The Proclamation will have one good effect; that is, it will call around Gen. Jackson all or nearly all those leaders and statesmen who have the confidence of the people in those states which have allways opposed his pretensions but which are devoted to the Union.

The proclamation is an able state paper and if Jackson is the most popular man in the United States it will effect [its purpose] if anything will. Possibly its firmness may drive the nulifyers but its arguments will not convince them. They have run mad—the disease is epidemick and unless soon arrested in its course our government is a nulity our liberty the liberty—of the assassin! justice a mockery and perpetually changing power the only rule of right.

We are quite anxious to hear how Virginia receives the President's Proclamation Much, perhaps the very existence of the Union depends upon his course. People generally have much confidence in her but for myself I fear the very worst.

Jan. 2d I am studying the Law. began 17th Dec. Esq. Fraser is my tutor. I get a lesson in Blackstone's Commentaries of about 20 pages a day. I know not what my prospects are but this much I know—I never will be a member of the bar when I am afraid of any of equal experience in the state. I should rather be the best hunter in an Indian tribe than a commonplace member of the New York bar. However it is useless to say what I will not be though well enough to think what I will do. So I think I will study faithfully day and night for seven years if by so doing I can make a respectable lawyer, and if I cannot I think I will try the mercantile business. Nevertheless if called upon in a good cause I should prefer the profession of arms if I could accommodate my mind to it.

Jan. 3rd Just heard from Virginia—affairs go the very worst possible. The governor is a nullifier and the Legislature not much better A committee of 21 have agreed to report resolutions affirming the Virginia doctrines I believe with some new and revolting features. The Nulifiers are requested to desist in their present course but are backed up in all their objections. The president's proclamation is condemned in severe terms, and congress is caled upon to see that the course therein contained be not followed and the doctrine is plainly avowed that a State has a right to secede from the Union and that its citizens are not guilty of treason in taking up arms against the government at the call of the state authorities.

It is reported also that the proclamation was very illy received in Charleston. I very much fear it will pass like the torch in the parched plains of Africa or like the Jumblers' fire burns in the mountains of India which sheds a gloomy light in the midst of thick surrounding darkness but to discover the spoliations of all that is beautiful in nature; the destruction of all the monuments of art, of the overwhelming ruin of the kings who rashly make it the declaration of their own destruction.

Our honest people are still confident in the success of the president, believing that a few hundred troops which are being sent on to Charleston will effectually protect the revenue officers and that the Nulifiers will not venture to strike the first blow.

Jan. 9th Evening. We have had a debate this evening on the propriety of our government's removing the Indians without their consent. We have debates allmost every week. our numbers are few but there are three faithful ones in the number. Mr. Lakatt one of our principal members has a peculiar faculty, such as I never met with in any other person, of appearing sensible and even reasonable in the greatest absurdities. He is skillful in the management of a question and is not particular as to which side he takes on any question. He is a particular friend of mine.

Jan. 10th News again from the south. The President's Proclamation has rather exasperated than killed the Nulifiers. They are proceeding in the most determined manner. several bills for executing the ordinance of nulification are in progress in both houses of the Legislature. The governor Gen. Hayne has at the request of the Legislature issued a proclamation in answer to that of the president which is well calculated to arouse the spirits and to inspire the ardor of the people to whom it is devoted. It is a most masterly production and in a good cause it would be to its author a memorial more imperishable than a pillar of marble.

Why are such men to be leaders of such a party. Men who have had the highest places under our government, and the most unexceptional places in the confidence of the people. It seems as though they were led by some blind and causeless fatality within as though the fixed mind had forsaken its utmost purpose and the whole soul had become the slave to objects which it knew not, and the patriot who but yesterday was pure as ether today has murdered himself and poisoned his friends that he might ruin his country. I have regarded Gen. Hayne as a father and only regretted that I had not a personal acquaintance. but though I will not say he is ruined I fear his country is undone. O! curse the fatal star that shone upon his birth too brightly. But I am indulging in imagination. Our country may not be ruined. Even now the business may be settled and if not new governments may be built on the ruins of the old, perhaps securing liberty to the people or perhaps power to the tyrants.

The whole world has her troubles also and fears are entertained that the Belgium question may embroil all Europe in war. Great Britain and France have allready interfered in favour of Belgium and Russia and Prussia are known to view these things with disquietude and distrust.

Jan. 27. Our political affairs are rather growing worse though they have not yet come to an exact crisis. The day on which the Carolina act of Nulification is to take effect is just at hand; only four days hence. Congress are busily engaged on a new Tariff bill, reducing the rate of duties to the standard of 1816, which is merely nominal. Perhaps it might have been well to have kept it at [the old] rate but it is too late now. The rate of duty on foreign merchandise was gradually increased from that time down to 1828 when it had become a perpetual protection to American Manufacturers. Now an attempt is being made to suddenly reduce it to a mere nominal sum and of course to completely ruin those who have invested all their fortunes in manufacturing under its protection. The plan may succeed and may not. Nothing can be gained by it. The manufacturing states would suffer a complete ruin by its effect. And we of the western part of the Empire State might feed wheat to our hogs and set the girls to making linnen or doing kitchen work for 30 or 40 cents per week.

If reports are true the President has exposed himself to the just contempt of all the world. His proclamation was worthy the place he occupied and was expected to draw round him a host of statesmen who had long been opposed to him. In that proclamation he told the people that the laws should be executed and the Union should be preserved; that the government authorities were not to be intimidated and that the menaces of the nulifiers were vain and nugatory.

But now if we have the truth he is intimidated and is very anxious by timely and unjust concession to back out of his own ground, to yield to a snarling faction, to buy the favour of the

Nulifiers at the expense of the Union to leave the New England states the choice of secession or total ruin.

There is no knowing his course A day beforehand. Every paper which he publishes is in a new style and his Messages to Congress would not be thought to be the same man's work. Nor does anyone pretend to believe he is the author of any of his state papers. This accounts for his published opinions being so far superior to his actions and private conversation. I am getting along quite well with my study. Have allready read one book of Blackstone except so much as relates to personal property. The study suits me and I think I shall continue it unless the field of battle lacks one man. [*About 2 words of cipher*]

We have a present prospect of a printing press in Forestville and it will if established be a great benefit to persons of literary and scientifick genius. The most favourable circumstance of all is that there is to be a literary paper in the commencement and that allready commenced in another place. [*2 paragraphs of cipher*]

Feb. 3d Sunday. The superstitious hold it waste but for myself I know of no time to go to do a good deed.

Yesterday I finished the first two books of Blackstone. I study about fifteen hours a day but one-half of this time is given to politicks and miscellaneous works, and I can only get about five days in a week. [*one and one-half lines of cipher*]

The President has communicated a message to both houses of Congress on the Carolina affairs, together with all the papers on that subject which he could obtain. There was some debate in Congress when these papers were submited. Mr. Calhoun (who has resigned the office of vice-president and accepted that of senator) made an animated speech against the president. There is no knowing how this business will end. Congress had been for some time engaged in a new tariff bill, but it is doubtful whether it will pass. The nulifyers wish not to have any reduction of the tarriff unless it is totally abollished. The Jackson men wish not to reduce it unless by so doing they can gain the nulifyers because they would lose the eastern strength and the manufacturing strength will not consent even to a partial reduction except to avoid civil war. There are many members who are willing to very much reduce the tarriff merely to avoid civil war but who will never consent to it short of an absolute pledge on the part of the leading Carolina statesmen that they will retract their position. This pledge never will be given but by absolute necessity. The political existence of Calhoun Hayne McDuffie Hamilton and several others who have figured in the highest political circles depend upon their success in this undertaking. they have 140,000 gallant spirits to back them up: they are a hot headed race and they will not retract unless influenced by sternn steel. They may compromise but they only will be the gainers in such a case. They will give nothing but by force or for a chance of taking double another time.

Feb. 8th On the 9th Dec. the Belgian [revolution] was effectually commenced. We had the news by the first [of] this month. How it will end is uncertain but this much is certain, that France will shake Europe like a sail in the wind. her king will rise or fall like a meteor in the air, his chance is precarious, but the course of his people is certain. The eastern powers still stand aloof, but [the] Prussians are making immense preparations to meet their wants.

[*2 lines of cipher*]

Feb. 9th I rather expect, or conjecture that Virginia will back out of her favour to Nullification a little but will stick to her old doctrines generally. She will not approve the president's Proclamation or the tarriff but will stick for the Union if she can regain her former influence. North Carolina I think is rather gaining for Nullification and Georgia will probably stand strong for it if circumstances favour some other southern states may cast some influence that way.

Thinking again of all the circumstances at the latest dates I am inclined to think Congress cannot reduce the tarriff at present. Last [news] from Washington was allmost the last of January. The tarriff bill was not nearly completed. Powerful exertions were making to delay until Congress could get some facts to act upon. many who were willing to reduce the duties wish to know something of the effect of particular species of industry. If they proceeded immediately large districts might be ruined by the operation of the law if they delayed but three days it would be too late. The bill could not even be published in Carolina before the die would be cast. Moreover if the bill was passed it would not do to have it take effect immediately. It would ruin half our merchants to permit foreigners to run in goods of the like kind and glut the market while their present stocks are on hand.

Feb. 29th The French took Antwerp citadel the last of December and since evacuated it and the Belgians have taken possession: there is again a small prospect of a general pacification in Europe. With us it is different, hostilities had not at the latest dates commenced. Indeed there is no certainty as to when the crisis will come. the nullifyers are making great preparations and yet delay action. It is probable they are in hopes of getting the assistance of other states by putting on the appearance of moderation. They have 20,000 volunteers in arms.

The Amaranth a literary paper just commenced at Westfield is to be removed to Forestville the seventh of March. This is a favourable circumstance for our literary geniuses. I hope it may give a spur to the Delphian Society.

[*5 lines of cipher*]

March 20th How strangely beautiful this night: it is the eve of my nineteenth year's end. I fancy it's a picture of myself. The piercing red flashes of the noiseless and unseasonable lightning in the distant west; the solemn rolling of distant and eternal waters: the beautiful murmur of a pleasant waterfall in an adjacent brook: the more than usual warmth of the season moderated by a pleasant western breeze: the uncouth darkness which mantles the whole face of heaven enveils the throne of the Spirit of Nature, spangled over by the bright radiant stars of a western sky and broken only by the distant flashings of the deep tinged lightning, conspire to make the scene solemnly beautiful, grand and majestic. Did I say I fancied the scene a picture of myself. Others may judge of me: I will not say it again, but my evening's walk was surely the journey of my past life. I was alone: the works of nature and of art surrounded me: those of art were prominent: they attracted my attention: I gazed upon them: I turned my eyes to their glimmering lights: they did not dazzle but bedimmed my eyes: I turned from them in unsatisfied silence: the beauty of the scene around me attracted my attention: the sun had hid her face beneath the western horison and the moon was veiled in clouds far over the eastern waters: I remembered them not: but those wonders of nature which were before me caught my attention: I gazed on the stars in solemn silence: I saw darkly the work of nature all around: 'twas mysterious and unaccountable: all was majestic and grand but I understood it not and turned away and viewed the airy works of man: everything around me now reformed: beauties appeared at a distance: but like the rainbow, they were beyond my reach: but the illusion drew me on: the darkness grew thicker, the sun apeared not, nor did the moon unveil her face, even the light of the stars dazzled my eyes to blindness, so long had I gazed on the shades around me: the lightnings played vividly on the far distant horison. On a sudden it flashed brightly around: the whole scene was enlightened and for a moment the illusive works of man appeared as they were: distorted uncouth and broken. I closed my eyes with the pain at the excess of light but the images were still before me: I saw them and considered: Ah the deception was before me I knew they were the works of art but I believed them the art of him who veils his face in light, and whose figure marked the changeless course of the star, I turned my eyes to the stars for light and to the works of nature for instruction: The darkness dispelled: the shades retired: the illusive works of man disappeared as I passed on, and the spirit of nature moved me with a holy inspiration: the sun had not yet appeared nor the moon arisen in the east but there was a glory in the light shades of evening like Milton's twilight in heaven. The face of nature was serenely beautiful not an unseemly mark appeared the human ken is short and the light of nature shone but dimly, but it was in an elusive light [*2 words of cipher*]

March 21, 1833 This is my birthday. I arise in hope bright prospects are before me but all depends upon most untiring exertion. 20 years of my life have already passed and what have I done. O! what have I done? Nothing! Nothing! Nothing but commenced doing. The last winter has given me a fair start. I know I have done well in my study and I believe my prospects are fine. Whether I ever shall make a first rate Lawyer or not is uncertain but my study for two years to come will be useful in business which I can follow if I do not practice that profession. Indeed in almost any business a knowledge of the fundamental principles of law and of some part of the detail is very useful if not absolutely necessary.

[*beginning of page, two words of cipher*] Let the rascal try me: he will find he has the rong chap.

January 1st 1834. Thus begins the new year. I am confined to labour as usual, but will [it] be beneficial in inuring me to habits of industry: so, so far from complaining that I have no leisure I begin to be glad that I am loaded with business.

My school is large and my health rather poor, but I find time to study considerable.

Jan. Last week my school was very full averaging seventy five scholars. I have in all 70 writers more than forty in Arithmetick and fifteen or twenty in Grammar and Geography each yet I neglect none.

The affair with Foster whom I dismissed from school did not end without some trouble (very agreeable trouble as far as I was concerned for I should not object to one fracas): and might not short of blood shed if I had [page torn] convinced him and four or [page torn] others that I was willing to [page torn] a little. As it was I merely had to be seen with a brace of pistols which I immediately disposed of and when they had concluded they were on the wrong tiger track it was my turn to laugh at them for being frightened with an iron candlestick,—but another name for a pistol.

Jan. 30th. I have a real rest, having only about sixty schollars on an average this week. Thus far I have had a very pleasant winter [*end of page*]

[*beginning of page*] it is very uncertain about his wanting to engage me now.

Feb 22 Today I have been to Fredonia to purchase presents for my schollars. Night finds me the most down that I have been these three years. Indeed I am about worn out for the present. School teaching does not agree with my health generally, but this winter my labours have been intolerable. No teacher in my acquaintance ever did half so much.

Feb 29th Today I am housed up for the first time in four years except when I cut my foot. I shall be about again soon. It is not my lot to be sick long. I had my portion of that in earlier days. I have sent word to my school. They will probably have the exhibition.

Town meeting is at hand and I should like an election to a place which would produce a little pay and leave me a little liberty to study. But there are two difficulties, first I am under age, second I am too inflexible too independent for the present dominent party

March 3d Just returned from a visit to my friends in Collins. I visit very little, less than I wish to.

I find myself nominated on what is called the people's ticket for constable. There is little prospect of success yet there is nothing like trying. A nomination from the other party would [be] better because that is stronger: for as to principle and talent there is little choice. The office is worth $300 a year and would be good exercise while studying [*end of page*]

March 9th Town meeting today and of all meetings for publick business which I ever witnessed or heard of none equaled this for folly and corruption. Only 472 votes were polled and from these the chairman found more than five hundred for allmost every office in town. One man who run on both tickets had 711 votes and for the office of Justice both candidates together had a still greater number.

[*4 lines of cipher*]

March 20th Time passes on but improvements do not allways keep pace, however I am trying what I can do in that line by again reading law. I now read with Esq. Rathbon at Silver Creek. I would embrace other business if it offered a fair prospect but shall not neglect this for any visionary project. I have not yet heard from uncle John but I do not think he will send for me. I was rather too late in writing to him and now the pressure in the money market is so great that business is at a dead standstill. Such times have not been experienced in sixteen years and the first question on Change is not who has broke but who remains. This is in consequence of a dispute between the National administration and the United States Bank. Gen. Jackson commenced a war upon the Bank immediately on coming into office and has continued it ever since. The deposits of publick money are removed to local Banks and the United States Bank in consequence has narrowed its business several millions while the local banks do not increase theirs in proportion lest they should be broke in a sudden pressure. There is no doubt the United States bank may be dispensed with and individual and publick business continue: but a proper plan has not yet been adopted and we have no prospect of one.

Mar. 21st Surely this is no strange day: much like other days: the sun rose at six and goes just fast enough to set at six though if it was more dependent than I am and ever have been I might think as it keeps behind clouds and winds and storms that it had a mind to play a prank and shorten or lengthen a day.

so busy in doing nothing as in the last of April and first of May. When I have little to do I have no time to do anything. There is not a more abominable saying than "not too many irons in the fire." The more the better provided they are not forgotten. While cooling the first hammer the second and heat the third regularity and attention only are necessary then none will burn

I am now studying law with Esq. Rathbone but my progress is rather slow. I give too much attention to farming at which I am also engaged with my father We have had a wonderful season. In February [the] roads were dusty and some trees began to put forth leaves. 12th of May snow was three inches deep on the hillsides. Many were planting corn but the soil suddenly became too light. The leaves of the forest were cut off and now beech timber looks as though it had been burned.

June 23 A miserable hot day. I am almost melted. I have given the day to news and light reading thus far. I must now try some thing of another sort for by grace of God and will of man I am appointed to deliver an address on temperance the first of July and all tell me it must be completely written. I believe I could speak as well without writing but I shall not try at first.

July 1st Well my time is coming. I shall soon have to make the temperance address. Probably there have been some misgivings as to the result but it will soon be decided.
Evening. It's done. After this experiment with my experience in debating I may safely ever consider myself perfectly at home in publick speaking.

July 4th Today our nation commences its 59th year, but the actions of our great men shew a determination never to permit it to outlive its 60th. The leaders of the people are governed by a strange infatuation half of them would gladly sink themselves to hell and drag the whole United States with them if by that means they could come into power.

Jackson and his friends have waged an interminable war against the bank of the United States merely to draw the attention of the people and keep together his party while they are carrying on their corrupt measures. The opposition are perpetually contending for the bank for which they care not a cent merely because it is the only rallying point on which so many different parties can be kept together.

Jackson would agree to the recharter of the bank and assist to do all evils he pretends to believe the bank capable of, if so doing he but could again be elected.

The opposition would abandon this bank and even establish the odious treasury bank if by that means they could come into power.

Finally patriotism is vanished from the land and as for honesty there never was much among mankind. Politicks never ran higher than now. There may have been a deeper feeling enlisted on the election of Jefferson, but there was not so much turbulence passion or real political exertion as now. The road of corruption was not so well known though people may have been as much inclined to use it.

A slight circumstance would be sufficient to shake our government to its very center. People have spent too much time in *mis*-calculating the value of the Union; to what purpose time only can tell. The future is to be dreaded though the great split of Allmost every party will probably prevent anyone's getting the upper hand and thus save [*end of page*]

Aug. 11th Today I fairly recommence my legal studies. As yet I have not studied in an office and of late my attention has been divided and much of it given to farming. I shall speedily prepare for business in Justice's courts and try to earn part of my expense.

Politicks are running wild. The opposition to the administration are trying to unite under the name of Whig. The plan may succeed but if it does corruption is the order of the day. Honour and virtue can never unite men of such discordant principles in such a cause.

I have just received papers from Uncle James which argue strongly that he will not be sold to Whigism to suit the caprice of traitors to Antimasonry.

Aug. 15th Business plenty, health good and spirits high. Business for my tutor, health for myself, and spirits for association and posterity? What have posterity to do with me. Well time shall answer. I have no trouble on that point. It is writen "Not in the Alcoran not in the Bible not in the will of the priesthood not in the good pleasure of him who claims the keys of Heaven and Earth and Hell no not in the secret decrees the inscrutiable Designs, the preordained declarations of a forever changing merciful and cruel creature of superstitious imagination seated high in heaven on a dazzling and splendid throne and gazed on by successive millions of human beings. But it is written; written in the constitution of nature and in the native bent and vigor of the mind. The principal part of my time is bestowed on law reading and office business but I find time withall to review my school studies and I am advancing a little in Algebra and commencing Geometry. Without a teacher as I always study [*end of page*]

Sept 5th Just been reading Waverly. Have read to his visit with the old tory in Scotland. It is the first Novel I ever read; and if Scot gained his popularity by writing such a work or a series of such works who could not be immortal? The last must be the best or men would not suffer the penace of reading the book. I believe he intimates in his preface that the work grows sweeter as it grows shorter. If what I have read is only a foundation for a superstructure it is well for it possesses strength without beauty: otherwise let this book witness what it may I have [seen] better writing

Sept 13th Whig meeting at Forestville called by professed Whigs of the revolution there was much squerming as to the manner in which names we[re] got to the call. One was obtained by gross deception and another put down without the shadow of reason or excuse after the most positive refusal. The meeting were enthusiastick but the principle actors exposed themselves to ridicule by their blunders.

Sept 15th Just heard that the W[h]igs had nominated Selden for governor and Seward Lieut. The ticket will weigh down on their shoulders.

16th Contradictory reports as to W[h]ig nomination. Some say that it is Buel for Gov. and Seward Lieut.—A tolerable ticket. Others that it is Seward for Gov. and Selden Lieut. The opposite of what we heard yesterday but no better.

17th The W[h]igs have nominated Seward for Governor and Stilwell for Lieut.

Nov 10th Well: the question is now answered and the Whigs have learned their fate in the Empire State. The battle of November was fought valiantly but the poor W[h]igs could not stand the steady rolling fire of the Democracy. Poor Webb of $52000 memory mourns woefully but there is no hope for him now. He is so used to the majority that he cannot bear grief as some of his colabourers can.

What new name this party of all parties will take I know not, but they must needs have some one, they have allready disgraced allmost every name sacred to freedom and generous greatness. But they have not yet learned that great names will not save them or that the people have intelligence enough to distinguish principles without regard to names.

Nov. 19th Mud and rain but no [*two and a half lines of cipher*]

Evening Well no down heartedness, no horrors now. The course is commenced. The first step is taken and the road to honor or obloquy is allready tried. The result a few years will determine. The result depends much on circumstance which can never be foreknown and over which no one person can have any controll. Yet I fondly hope it will not be inglorious for want of exertion. The first step was easy but of very little importance. I was retained on two suits this afternoon.

Nov 26 Today for once I shed tears! Aye tears of distress: of deep heart felt distress. The halls of the British Parliament with their Libraries and their documents sacred to the freedom and the greatness of our ancestors are burnt to ashes. Those memorable Halls where first in modern ages man dared assume his dignity and assert his rights and demand protection of Goverment: Where Kings have bowed to the majesty of the people: Where princes have begged their crowns at the choice of the people and not of right divine: Where victorious generals have received the united thanks of a great nation: Where Statesmen greater than Greece or Rome could boast and Princes more powerful than the Continent knew calmly submited their plans to the judgment of a deliberate assembly: Where plots involving the liberties of the people and the existance of the nation have been laid and detected: Where laws have been extorted from Kings and Parliaments dissolved by the sword are no more. Those venerable Halls speak with most manly eloquence the character and the destiny of man. The scenes of those Halls have long and frequently decided the fates of nations and empires, and they the work of successive ages and of various architects were strangely characteristick of the powers that assembled within them. But they are gone and perhaps their use may not long survive. All the works of man are destined to decay. Monuments of greatness and creations of luxury: memorials of antiquity and structures of today: palaces of Princes, Halls of Legislatures, and cells of Prisoners, all the works of art and alike the systems of intellect fall before the tooth of time. Even the soul inspiring poetry must die with the language in which it is writen. And fame, fame alone of all the productions of man's folly *may* survive.

Dec 12 Good Heavens! I am growing misanthropick! I dread the thought. What can be the secret cause? Is it the reading of fiction and overwrought scenes of life? It must be. I can think of no other reason. I will not yet read the "Dutchman's Fireside": I have enough of that misery in the Indians revenge. Let me not know the beginning or end of it. Burns is laid aside. His Highland Mary makes me sad: but how do I curse man's weaker passions—no, finer but stronger passions on reading of "the lass that made the bed for him". Why did the wretch tell that fatal tale so fascinatingly. I have a good mind to lay by Shakespear. It is disagreeable to see vice and wickedness unpunished: but to see it triumph over virtue is misery. What bitter tears did I shed over the innocent dying Desdemond? O, shall she never revive. Where is the Promethean fire which shall again warm that heart and reillume those features. Yet I venerate the mighty miserable Moor who hath done it. Who would not pity him in his terrible deliberation? Who would not in that agonizing moment when to[o] late he learned her innocence

Dec 13th I have allmost a mind to leave this place, go to Forestvill and learn the Latin. I am doing simply nothing. True I read very regular but what does it amount to. There is some thing radically wrong in my course of study or I am totally unfit for it. Besides this I am earning nothing. Perhaps I was born for poverty and disappointment but I do not believe it. I have as yet succeeded as well as could possibly be expected. True I have done nothing in all my life and am a fool yet but that is not so poorly as most have done who like me have had no opportunities,

Dec 19th This looks like going ahead. though not quite so profitably. Last monday for the first time in my life I undertook to play a game at Checkers. and last evening I assisted in the arrangements for a New-Years Ball. and was appointed manager. Really I do not approve of balls but they are better than any substitute which would be adopted if proposed

Dec 24th Just returned from a visit with my friends in Collins. An opposition has been started to our New-Year's Ball. Let the opposition go to the Devil. So may I if they get the best company. They have as good a right to a Ball as we but they had no right after attending our meeting of arrangements, voting for every thing that was done and not even breathing a dissent, to do any thing for the injury of our party. No Gentleman can get up a party and then try to break it down.

[*1835*]

January 1st

I have rejoiced in the sunshine and smiled in the shade of another year It is gone, I hope not lost. But it is gone in the way of the world, and passed as others have passed their days who have died in obscurity Curse me eternally if that be my fate. I know it is in my power to make it other wise. But to do that it may be necessary to turn back the new leaf I have been turning over. Now for the first time in my life I have ended the past and commenced the new year in a frolick. But it was a glorious frolick Quite the more so because like every thing else now a day[s] it met with opposition That suits me. Let the opposition have the loafers. I am satisfied with Gentlemen and Ladies. I must let this suffise for a long time. Frolicking is not the business for me to become rich or great by: thank fortune; or fate.

January 18th Returned from a visit at David's* yesterday. He has passed a day of Joy and Grief such as he never before knew.
[*two and one-half lines of cipher*]
Such are the changes and disappointments of life In the morning he awoke with gladness and his eye beamed on the face of his first born, with hope, gladness, and confidence. The sun had scarcely risen and that offspring was among those who have been but are not. Grief fell heavily upon Priscilla but I beheld its workings most sensibly in David from my very intimate knowledge of his temperament.

February 25th Good Heavens! And the blind shall see. This morning for the first time in many years I have been able to read a word with my right eye covered; and that a word of common print (Graham's Practice p 135–14th line from bottom, last word) This should be booked first of this days deeds

March 10th

"*We wither, from our youth, we gasp away*
"*Sick, sick; unfound the boon, unslaked the thirst*
"*Though to the last in verge of our decay,*
"*Some phantom lives such as we sought at first*
"*But all to late, so are we doubly curst.*
"*Love, fame, ambition, avarice;—'tis the same*
"*Each idle,—and all ill,—and none the worst*
"*For all are meteors with a different name*
"*And death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.*"

So my hopes are all blasted; Yet I can not dispair. Two months since I had the strongest prospect of making a clear profit of eight hundred dollars in a little more than a year without neglecting my studies. Now if I can save eighty dollars by abandoning my studies

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* David Strang, older brother of the writer.

it is all I can hope for, and more than I expect. I had just purchased the land on which there was a mill worth four hundred dollars the title to which would soon fail and I should have had the mill. I had also agreed for a piece of land subject to a contract, on which I was sure of making two hundred and fifty dollars. David bought the mill and I was unwilling to dispossess him and relinquished my title at cost. Father was a party to the contract on the land and on account of his personal feelings I abandoned my agreement for that. There goes six hundred and fifty dollars and a year's use of it out of my eight hundred. [*two lines of cipher*]
$300. but by the opposition of one of whose support I had counted much I [*six lines of cipher*]

But still I have hopes even for that business and if I fail there I have an other hope. Perhaps these hopes are but illusions keeping me from that business to which I must eventually retire, but it is not given me to dispair. There is one thing which I can do. Then I should have a small sum of money, sufficient to purchase a tract of wild land for a farm and I know I could live on, and improve that and become independant Yet it is not a pleasant thought. My mind is not yet prepared for it, and though I should be hapy in that situation I do not covet it. I have not seen enough of the world; played enough wild pranks. nor acted my part of its contentions. I have not yet learned to desire that station which I consider most happy, nor to be satisfied with that which I consider most desirable.

The business I was in a week since suited me best: busy from monday morning till tuesday evening without sleeping or scarcely eating in twenty sprees, half a dozen frays, and a dozen quarrels, without injuring or being injured by any one. and for politicks, and all for the party which *did not* support me against the one that *did!* During that forty hours all was stratagem: every man I met was laying a plan to surprise some other one, and a lot of willy fellows spent a night in watching my movements all to no purpose. I succeeded in every thing except one where I was betrayed by a printer. Not so with those who worked for me. Pity every one can not do his own work

March 18th Again the anniversary of my birth approaches. But I am unprepared to greet the day. Perhaps it is bad policy to linger here in continual but fruitless hope; and perhaps it is erroneous to indulge such hopes as mine: but if I now look for too much who shall look for the future? If my present aspirations are too high, I may as well abandon my future hopes; mark out a different course, and content myself to live that life which I now b[e]lieve the least unhappy. But ill fortune is frequently the best fortune; and probably it may be so now. At least I am determined so to regard it so long as I have an ultimate resort.

It is nothing to be unsuccessful. To be disappointed in what I have expected until it has became part of my regular system is the least that I mind. Indeed I do not mind any thing as though I was injured by it; and it is matter of remark and complaint with my friends that I keep up the same eternal smile and apparent satisfaction whether successful or unsuccessful. Yet that fact is probably for my happiness. I find much satisfaction in looking on the world the smooth side out, though I might prefer acting my part rather roughly.

March 20th Just had an opportunity to go to the State line Mills, Allegany, as a Lawyer: good mind to go: perhaps might find some speculation: at least get a little money, an article which would be very convenient at this time. But I will not start this evening. Shall be a year older tomorrow!

[*beginning of new page*]

"*Cheers on the nest the mother bird*
"*The ice-lock'd streams, as if they felt*
"*Her touch, to liquid diamond melt;*
"*Nature unbinds her wintry shroud,*
"(*As the soft sunshine melts the cloud,*)
"*With infant gambols sports along,*
"*Bounds into youth, and soars on song;*
"*—Who would not wish, unrival'd here,*
"*That Spring might frolick all the year?*"

[MS torn] is beautiful: but it canot last. If the seasons were all pleasant as this day it would smooth down our natural roughness, conquer our furious and ungoverned passions, and render man that inoffensive being, which some excellent, but too sanguine writers have immagined he some day would be.

March 31st I must leave Silver Creek today. I am very sorry to leave the place, but to remain under prese[n]t circumstances will never do. I have been here nearly eight months; have been constantly ready to attend to business; have been uniformly successful; yet I have not in that time earned fifteen dollars

June 14th This is a long blank in the book; but not in life. Since the last date many strange events have been jumbled together; few of which shall be booked. though few forgotten. I have now the Small Pox: down with it six days 'Tis pretty severe. There are more than three hundred pocks on my face and all burn like fire

June 17th Still housed up though rather [MS torn] [com]fortable. I feel able to work but cannot bear exercise and am covered with sores. [*three lines of cipher*]

June 24th The great labour is ended All Forestville combined against me and swore my ruin for assisting David in recove[r]ing his Mill of Brown. Three suits were commenced against me, One was discontinued and two withdrawn after making twenty dollars costs which they had to pay then I was complained of for false swearing and the Justice who issued the warrant being a mere cypher in their hands committed [me] but the officer refused to take me in custody and I went alone and put in bail. The grand jury sat the 22d. Forestville spit its venom in vain. Its highways and lanes and ditches were emptied to go and cry against me. All Hell was raked for false witness. Young men whose beards were not grown harangued the multitude. Old sinners whose feet trembled beneath their emaciated bodies and whose eyes stare horror-struck at the gaping grave appeared in open day and pleaded jurors to perjure themselves and ruin me. Clergymen and their pious followers prayed the overwhelming vengeance of the Allmighty on the heaven daring Infidel who Providence had thrown in their power. Men who have said in their hearts and spoken with their lips "there is no God" thanks fate and fortune that I should soon fall a sacrifice to unchanging friendship upon the shrine of their power it's done. 18 or 19 jurors say "not guilty" I shall never forget the friends who were faithful at that moment. For my [illegible] to my innocence let the light of future judgment reveal it.

June 26th Recovered of the Small-pox. Today I am out at work as usual.

June 27th Hard time this. Yesterday the creek raised very high endangering the works about the Mill. I worked in the water half the afternoon, some of the time completely covered and once swept off by the current. Today I have been in two hours but finally left and went to uncle Davison's to see uncle Manly James who has been there nearly a week in venturing to call on me. Uncle John W. J. and Lady have gone to the southwest she staying [a]t Pittsburg while he goes to Nashville they will return this way Uncle Manly is quite a different person from what I expected.

July 9th The anniversary of freedom and the birthday of liberty has come, Aye come, but not past I cannot praise our freedom and our fair country—Another Subject—they who know the most must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth. The tree of knowledge is not that of life, philosophy and science and the springs of wonder and wisdom of the world I have assayed and in my mind there is a power to make these subject to itself. But they avail not: I have done men good and I have met with good [one word illegible] among men. But this availed not: Good or evil, life, Powers, passions, all I see in other beings have been to me as rain unto the sands [*end of page*]

I have no [word illegible] And feel the curse to have no natural fear. No fluttering throb that beats with hopes or wishes Or lurking of something on the earth—[*end of page*]

the Union when the virtue of the people would not. [*Several lines blank*] A great man hath fallen. No! he shall never fall. Lafayette is dead: but death made no conquest. He hath filled the measure of his days with [illegible] and glory. He hath lived like an angel and died like a god. Though his spirit-striving patriot-animating mortal part hath ceased to move among us, to cheer the world and strike chill dread and horror to its oppressors But his memory shall live. The spirit of his greatness shall live. While there is an aspirant for liberty *his* early days shall inspire his soul. While a patriot exists *his* latest hours shall cheer him in his toil. While Liberty is a blessing to man; While greatness is an honour to nations; While tyranny is hated by the people and oppression is deprecated by the sufferers never shall his name be forgotten. Liberty, Honour, Freedom, Justice, Virtue, and Glory

Until all these shall perish
Until the stones shall crumble into dust
And the oak tree decay with age
Until streams shall cease to flow
And the mountain waters be dried up at their sources
Until these be lost in the flood of age
Each bard and song and subject of story
The stranger shall not ask "who was the nation's guest
Or where dwelt the apostle of liberty

Sept. 13th Every Sunday is stormy this luckless season. However there is one good result therefrom. It keeps a fellow out of mischief. I have not been very mischievous on the Sabbath this summer. I have had too much work to attend to. Nearly everything except the money business goes wrong. That does very well. Others are growing better. We will see how they turn. The road which never turns is longer than Satan's from Hell to Earth.

Oct. 20th I cannot die. If the thing was possible I should not now be among the living. Within the last six months everything short of naked swords has been tried in vain. Today accident has undertaken the work but I yet live. I know this is treating the subject too lightly: but I have met with so many difficulties and dangers and perils among false friends of late that even the elements seem as enemies to me when I am endangered by them and it is natural to treat them with the same scorn as my living enemies when I escape them. The accident was this. I started from the head of the floom [flume] to walk on a board to some flood wood lodged in the pond for the purpose of starting it over the dam intending to return to the floom before it went over. The water was at this time higher than it was ever before known sheeting over the dam four feet. The board on which I steped (though I had several times walked it before) broke and let me in. I stoped near where I struck five or six feet down the dam. In an effort to move towards the floom I was carried to the end of the sparr [span?] my head reaching over. Here David reached me a board but my exertion to raise myself by that loosed me from the dam and I started over seeing I must go to prevent going head foremost I seized the end of a sparr as with the convulsive grasp of death holding on till I completely turned round striking the rocks below as a bear fall[s] from a tree. I was carried about 30 rods when I caught to a tree which had lodged in the middle of the creek the water ran furious as a mill tail more than six feet deep and rolling like a lake in a storm. I was carried the most of the way under water yet seldom touched bottom I made several efforts to catch hold of objects I came near to once I caught to a limb I came under but it broke and I was immediately carried under a mass of flood wood and wedged down at the bottom where I remained about half a minute when between most desperate exertions I succeed[ed] in bringing myself out. After this I grew weak very fast until I got out. as I approached the log where I stoped I raised above water and saw indistinctly something that I hope[d] might be terra firma. I was immediately sucked under water when striking the rock and springing with all my might I brought one foot in contact with a log. That swung me round and I caught hold and clumb above water when I raised and got up. The next question was how I should get ashore and I directed David to go around a[nd] fall a tree from the opposite shore to me which he did in less time than anyone would immagine it possible and I climbed ashore.

What a multitude of thoughts were crowded together in that short space of time. Brief has been my life, for then I remembered it all few are my friends but none were forgotten; Few also my enemies, but it was a melancholy thought that of the most relentless I was perhaps to die unavenged.

Speaking of dying I may say I did not but for a moment expect to die (though I knew the chances were against me) but in that moment how did imagination [picture] the obsequies of my end; friends sobing around; my poor heart-broken mother sinking by my pale remains; those who in life had injured me deep as hatred could conceive or malice could invent standing in clusters round talking, perhaps that the hand of God had done it, and then offering their consoling (ah! vile) assistance. I thought too that this was to be the last end of all my hopes and prospects and aspirations. To die is no [word illegible] if we are to live again: but when should the end be. I would not live forever.

Nov. 22d All things appear to be in their natural channel again. Life is the same as of old, except that it has more cares. I am glad I have not a family. Yet man was formed for society. Without it he is hardly human. Every man at middle age should have about him a wife and family.

Dec. 6th Again the year approaches its end. O! time time how quickly thou fleest away. What has become of the past. I have lived allmost 23 years. Behind is allmost blank, while ahead is only thick darkness. Should I die now I have lived in vain. O! the curse: to have done nothing for posterity.

[*1836*]

Jan. 1st——

It seems to me that's a long blank.

Feb. 8th Just returned from a visit in Collins Aunt Charlotte is no more. Attended her funeral while there.

Mar. 21st Again has rounded around that dark star which shined over my birth, though dim, too brightly.

"*Who is* he *so swiftly flying?*
His career no eye can see.
Who are they *so early dying?*
From their birth, they cease to be.
Time—behold how quick its pace!
Moments—who can count their race?"

Youth is not rich in its stores of time and middle age is soon exhausted. After, is a small sinking pool which few enjoy and less profit by. I would never be an old man though I wish to live forever.

Let me see the past year has produced some advantages. It has nearly paid its expenses and counts full time in my professional studies. Pity it was not really full time. Too much of my time has ever been given to other things. When I have made up my three years' study I shall have scarcely given up one year to the business. But what more has the year brought forth? Nothing worthy of my remembrance—but it has continued one thing which I will not forget. True in the time I have prepared for going to New Orleans; but that is not as though I had gone; at least it does not so much expose me to the yellow fever, though it may mean the rambling fever. And I have ta[lked] of going to Texas, and that is cheaper than going; but now if I could realize one-half that is said in the printed descriptions of the country I would go there rather than to any other country.

I have neither friends, vassals, or money. I was not born to fortune, name, or influence. I was never the favourite of accident or chance. No man ever gave me a dollar; and if half the world should die I should not inherit land enough to [*end of page*]

May 7th Here is another blank surely—the book will last the longer.

I just returned from a visit to N. E. in Pennsylvania: 'tis the first time I ever was out of my native State. So wednesday fourth of May 1836 at 12 o'clock I passed the bourne of my own dear, my own great New York; the greatest and best. the Lady Superour of this community of sister states. Pennsylvania may [be] second, but how greatly inferour. Perhaps she will not allways be second, but New York must allways be first, unless the swamps of the mother of rivers rise to midair and redeem New Orleans from the eternal pestilence. When the five millions of drowned land at the mouths of the Mississippi shall be cultivated gardens and the enterprising Yankee may live on the banks of that mighty water without trembling at the pestilence that yet not only lurks in darkness but stalks forth at noonday; then may New York find a rival: till then never.

I have had a fine visit, particularly with the Mutes [?] They are favourites with me. Sally Hysted is very inteligent: quite smarter than ordinary ladies.

There is nothing permanent but change. And such strange changes there are. We are all selling out. I had rather live here than in any other place God ever created but if all my friends go I shall "go too" as the great man said when he went to Babylon to make confusion. Florida is a better place and Texas best. I wish to go there but if I should mother would cry herself to death they need help and well deserve it. [*Cipher*]

May 29th Well I have commenced the last page of the thousand things to write and no cash to purchase another book. How many changes have hapened since I commenced this little volume. Very few of them are chronicled here.

Pearces's family started for Root River* yesterday. Benjamin has been there a year and sent for them. Good fortune betide them. They have been faithful to me: faithful to the obligations of friendship.

[*Cipher*]

I am again reading law at Silver Creek. I think I shall not read there long. There is but a little business. So Old Book Farewell.

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* Modern Racine, Wisconsin.

III

Joseph Smith's Letter of Appointment

Nauvoo June 18th 1844

MY dear son Your epistle of may 24th proposing the planting of stake of zion in wisconsin and the gathering the saints there was duly received & I with most of the breathren whose advise I called in were of opinion that you was deceived by a spirit not of this world great but not good. brother Hyrum however thought otherwise and favored the project not doubting it was of God I however determined to return you an unfavourable answer for the present but oh the littleness of man in his best earthly state not so the will of the Almighty. God hath ruled it otherwise and a message from the throne of grace directed me as it hath inspired you and the faith which thou hast in the shepherd the stone of Israel hath been repaid to thee a thousand fold and thou shalt be like unto him but the flock shall find rest with thee and God shall reveal to thee his will concerning them. I have long felt that my present work was almost done and that I should soon be called to rule a mighty host but something whispers me it will be in the land of spirits where the wicked cease from troubling and the bands of the prisoner fall off my heart yearns for my little ones but I know God will be a father to them and I can claim face to face the fulfilment of promises from him who is a covenant keeping God and who sweareth and performeth and faileth not to the uttermost the wolves are upon the scent and I am waiting to be offered up if such be the will of God knowing that though my visage be more mar[r]ed than that of any it will be unscar[r]ed and fair when archangels shall place on my brow the double crown of martyr and king in a heavenly world in the midst of darkness and boding danger the spirit of Elijah came upon me and I went away to inq[u]ire of God how the church should be saved I was upon the hill of the temple the calm father of waters rolled below changeless & eternal I beheld a light in the heavens above & streams of bright light illumi[n]ated the firmament varied & beautiful as the rainbow, gentle, yet rapid as the fierce lightning. the Almighty came from his throne of rest. He clothed himself with light as with a garment. He appeared & moon & stars went out. the earth dissolved in space. I trod on air & was borne on wings of cherubims, the sweetes[t] strains of heavenly musick thrilled in my ear but the notes were low & sad as though they sounded the requiem of martyred prophets I bowed my head to the earth & asked only wisdom & strength for the church the voice of God answered my servant joseph thou hast been faithful over many things & thy reward is glorious the crown and sceptre are thine and they wait thee but thou hast sinned in some things & thy punishment is very bitter the whirlwind goeth before & its clouds are dark but rest followeth & to its days there shall be no end study the words of the vision for it tarrieth not & now behold my servant james j Strang hath come to thee from far for truth when he knew it not & hath not rejected it but had faith in thee the shepherd and stone of israel & to him shall the gathering of the people be for he shall plant a stake of Zion in Wisconsin & I will establish it & there shall my people have peace & rest & shall not be mooved for it shall be established on the prairie on white river in the lands of Racine & Walworth & behold my servants james & Aaron shall plant it for I have given them wisdom & Daniel shall stand in his lot on the hill beside the river looking down on the prairie & shall instruct my people & plead with them face to face behold my servant james shall lengthen the cords & strengthen the stakes of Zion & my servant Aaron shall be his counsellor for he hath wisdom in the gospel & understandeth the doctrines & erreth not therein & I will have a house built unto me there of stone & there will I show myself to my people by many mighty works & the name of the city shall be called voree which is being interpreted garden of peace for there shall my people have peace & rest & wax fat & pleasant in the presence of their enemies but I will again stretch out my arm over the river of waters & on the banks thereof shall the House of my choice be but now the city of Voree shall be a strong hold of safety to my people & they that are faithful and obey me I will there give them great prosperity & such as they have not had before and unto Voree shall be the gathering of my people & there shall the oppressed flee for safety & none shall hurt or molest them & by this shall they know that I have spoken it the people there and the owners of the land shall show kindness to them for great calamities are comeing on the church & such as have not been & if they scatter the ungodly of the world shall swallow them up but if they gather to my city of voree there will I keep them under the shadow of my wing & the cities from whence my people have been driven shall be purged with a high hand for I will do it & my people shall be again restored to their possessions but dark clouds are gathering for the church is not yet wholly purged & now I command my servants the apostles & priests & elders of the church of the saints that they communicate & proclaim this my word to all the saints of God in all the world that they may be gathered unto and round about the city of Voree & be saved from their enemies for I will have a people to serve me & I command my servant Moses Smith that he go unto the saints with whom he is acquainted and unto many people & command them in my name to go unto my city of Voree and gain inheritants therein & he shall have an inheritants therein for he hath left all for my sake & I will add to him many fold if he is faithful for he knows the land and can testify to them that it is very good

so spake the Almighty God of heaven thy duty is made plain and if thou lackest wisdom ask of God in whose hands I trust thee & he will give thee unsparingly for if evil befall me thou shalt lead the flock to pleasant pastures

God sustain thee

Joseph Smith.

james j Strang

P S Write me soon & keep me advised of you[r] progress from time to time

IV

Orson Hyde's Revelation against Strang

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

The following communication is thrown out in print for the benefit of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and every member is left to judge through whom it was given, and from what source it came; and whether it is the voice of the Good Shepherd, or the voice of a stranger.

IN my meditations, this morning, the Spirit of the Lord came upon me, and I was moved to write: and being grieved in my spirit on account of false pretences by evil designing persons to gain power, and lead away the flock of God; It whispered me and said:

Evil men ambitious of power, must needs arise among you, and collect from among them those who are not the elect, and such as are instruments in my hands, and are permitted to try my people, and to collect from among them those who are not the elect, and such as are unworthy of eternal life. Grieve not after them, neither mourn nor be alarmed. My people know my voice and also the voice of my spirit, and a stranger they will not follow. Therefore such as follow strangers are not my people. Behold James J. Strang hath cursed my people by his own spirit and not by mine. Never, at any time, have I appointed that wicked man to lead my people, neither by my own voice, nor by the voice of my servant JOSEPH SMITH, neither by the voice of mine angel: but he hath sought to deceive and Satan helpeth him: but before of old was he one that was ordained to gather the tares of the field, and mine angels have chosen him to do it because he was a wicked man, even as Judas was chosen to betray his Lord. But his spirit and ambition shall soon fail him, and then shall he be called to judgement and receive that portion which is his mete. And his treacherous followers who have forsaken the counsel of their brethren and turned from the covenants of their God, and have cast asunder the tenderest ties, must drink from a bitter cup.

Let no man who putteth his trust in me be troubled about his rights The worthy shall have their rights and no power can prevent it; for I will give them the hearts of my people, and their voice is my voice, even as my voice is the voice of my father; and what they bind on earth, I will bind in heaven: But the unworthy have no rights except these: Repentence or condemnation. If they act upon the former, behold they are justified, but if not, they must suffer the consequences of the latter. By this you may know the unworthy among my people: for whomsoever they reject, the same are rejected of me. And woe to such as shall follow him who hath been rejected by my people. If my people sin I will correct and chasten them because I love them, yet I will not reject them, neither give my kingdom to other people, for behold the end draweth nigh, and judgement will I pour out upon your oppressors and upon those who accuse you to hide their own iniquity and their shame, and to get power for unholy purposes and not for the building up of my kingdom. Let such beware lest they fall by the hand of the *destroyer* whose arrows are plague and pestilence before their designs are accomplished.

Let my saints gather up with all consistent speed and remove westward, except such as are counselled to tarry and must needs remain to settle their business according to the counsel of my servant JOSEPH SMITH, in the day that he was with you in the flesh, and also according to the counsel of my servants, the Twelve whom I have chosen, and who have abode in me.

Let there be no more disputes or contentions among you about doctrine or principle, neither who shall be greatest, but hearken to those things which I have spoken unto you, and which have before been given and you shall rest in my kingdom, and have glory and honor forever and ever—Yea! Saith the Spirit, and the Spirit is truth, and the truth abideth forever: Amen.

[*Printed in Nauvoo, March 14, 1846.*]

Bro. Sanger,*

I SEND you a communication which is original & given through me. I would be glad that you would send it to the norwegian brethren after you have read it. My best Respects and kind wishes to yourself and family, and also to the saints in your section of country.

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* The remaining portion of the document is a letter in the hand of Orson Hyde, attached to the printed revelation.

Strangism is dead here, and some who were carried away with it for a little time have returned to the church and confessed their errors and sins, and if any honest man or woman has been deceived thereby, it is hoped they may also do likewise in your section of country.

I am, Sir, Yours in Christ

ORSON HYDE.

Addressed: Mr. Sanger Merchant Ottawa Ill.

V

Strang's Summons to the Twelve

IN the progress of human events a crisis is near at hand when in all human probability the decision will rest with you and your colleagues whether the people unto whom you and your colleagues act as leaders shall be rejected as a church with their dead or shall be accepted of God and bring up those who slept without the gospel, and whether they shall be mooved out of their place at the holy city, and the Temple of our God delivered to the poluting hand of the Gentile, or shall be built up in the most holy order preparatory to the coming of the Son of God.

I know very well that you were never ignorant of the fact that your Mission as an Apostle is solely to the nations of the earth and not to the Church and that you hold only the keyes of the opening of the Gospel to the nations and not the keyes of ordinances blessings and revalations, and finally that you can do nothing except it be under the direction of the Presidency of the Church and can direct none but the seventies.

God by the mouth of the Prophet Joseph gave a promise to his people when he established them at Nauvoo that if his people would hearken unto his voice and unto the voice of his servant whom he had appointed to lead them, they should not be mooved out of their place. That people have hearkened to the Twelve as man never before hearkened to the voice of Spiritual leaders. If you are the man appointed of God to lead the Church why are they about to be mooved? The desolation and destruction daily falling on the Church are attributable solely to the misgovernment of those who usurp authority therein

I therefore solemnly admonish and direct you to cease all your usurpations in the Church to cease to exercise any of the authorities and powers of the first Presidency of the Church and to go out and preach the Gospel to the nations of the earth which have not received it, and I direct and require that you first report yourselves to the Presidency of the Church at the Stake at Voree and there make satisfaction for the wrongs you have done as it is said or in the

alternate answer to charges to be prefered against you, and receive the directions for your further guidance and I give you until the first day of April next to appear there.
Done at Ottawa January 13th 1846, by

JAS. J. STRANG *Pres.* Ch.J.C.L.D.S.

BRIGHAM YOUNG
H. C. KIMBALL
P P PRATT
ORSON PRATT
ORSON HYDE
WILLIAM SMITH
JOHN TAYLOR
JOHN E. PAGE
WILLARD RICHARDS
GEORGE A SMITH

VI

Letter of Lester Brooks to James M. Adams

Laporte Lorain County Ohio
January 12th 1847

Brother Adams

I HAVE just retu[r]ned from England with Martin Harris my health is very poor has been since I was sick at your house in Illinois I have a bad disease on my lungs which prevents my Preaching considerable I feel sometimes as if I should not have health any more I did not come home on account of my hea[l]th I came because I thought it very necesary that Martin Harris leave that country and there was no other way only for me to come with him which I am quite glad that I did I left him in Philidelph[i]a could get him no fa[r]ther another reason was I with many Brethren in England thought it quite nesesary that the Church at Voree should know how the Church is situated in England there are many things that I cannot write that I could say if I was there The Brighamites have as many as fifty men from their Camp in England all their bullies [they] have them over evry Conference and over evry large branch of the Church they are determined to maintain the ground in that Country at all hazards there is no teaching that is calculated to satisfy the Brethren but what they teach they teach that Brigham Young was appointed President of the Church by revalation and that through Joseph Smith and was made a matter of record in the Law of the Lord at the time and that he (Brigham) is receiving more revalations than even Joseph did and that he is Prophet seer Revalator and translator farther the reason why this thing has not been made known before is beca[u]se it was not wisdom in God

It was nesesary that the matter be kept secret from the Church for a time that it be ascertained who were the Elect and who were not to see who could be deceived by false Prophets that must arise I heard Wheelock testify that on the morning that Joseph started for Carthage he heard him say that Strang was an aspiring man and must be put down finally there is not anything that is nesesary to be said to answer their purpose but what is said but still their

Contradictory teachings and the wicked spirit the[y] manifest against the smith family and finally against all that dare oppose them they have got the saints under Covnant to shut out all that oppose them after all thinking men are not satisfied with them and if the Church should prosper in this Country they can be overthrown in that Country if it fails here it will fail in England the work is well begun in that Country Brother William Cosmer [?] from Cleveland I left in charge a Brother Wilson from Philidelphia with a nomber of English Brethren are doing all they can when I came from them I expected to retu[r]n early in the spring have engaged a number of Elders to go over with me there should go from Voree Br Strang if possible Brother Greenhow Br. Page William Smith ceartain they must not fail in my opinion I intend to come to Voree as soon as my health and circumstances will admit then I can tell you many things that I cannot think to write in this letter

I must now touch a subject which is painful for me to think or write about when I got to New york I found the Branch in most stupid condition they have a pamphlet written by Ruben Miller against Brother St[r]ang they are inclined to think there is something quite wrong I Preached to them Builded them up as well as I could I came to Philidelphia found the Branch some better a Rigdonite was there said a letter had been receved at Castle Garden that Brother Strang had a Revalation that the spiritual Wife was true many beleived it I preached done them all the good I could I came to Pittsburgh I found but few that dare do anything they all felt hurt about some thing published by Brother Adams they are in a dead State quite. I came home to Laporte found a paper headed Mormon doings givin[g] an account of a certain secret society and covnant [tha]t has been entered into by Brother Strang and many others which had produced an unhappy state of affairs in the Church at your place the Branches through this Country have abandoned all Meetings the Church in Kirtland have voted to disfellowship Brother Strang as I am informed I have not been there I am informed farther that they are going to uphold David Whitmer as President of the Church. Now Brother Adams you may be assured there has not anything that has hapened to me since I have been a member of the Church that disapoints me like the present state of the Church when the news reaches England it will destroy all that has been done and will give the Brighamites great advantage

Now Brother Adams I suspend all opinion until I learn the other side of the story

Do not delay an answer one mail write me plainly on all matters Give my Respects to all friends

Your Brother
LESTER BROOKS

Addressed: James M Adams Voree Wisconsin
Endorsed: Answered Jan 27th 1847

VII

Correspondence concerning Inheritance of Mother Smith

Copy

Mother Smith,

AFTER considering the matter of your support we have come to the conclusion that we can furnish you a comfortable house to live in and give Two hundred dollars yearly payable monthly or Quarterly.

This is considered honorable and if your children get an inheritance they must get it upon their own merit and not upon yours, and if William is to be encouraged in your house in slandering the Twelve and speaking against them; and in saying the church is without a head, you cannot expect to derive your support from a lifeless body neither will the church be willing to make any provisions for you if he is to be alowed to go on against the church in your house.

We have the honor of being your humble serv^{ts}

(signed) BABBITT HEYWOOD & TULMER

Trustee[s] in trust for the church of Jesus Christ of LDS

To Mother Smith

Endorsed: Copy Letter sent to Mother Smith

March 22^{d} 1846

Mess^{rs} Babbitt Heywood & Tulmer

I RECEIVED your letter of today, by the hand of the black boy, and I may inform you that I cannot describe my feelings when I perused its contents, such proscribed views as you have there advanced shews plainly that I am the agrieved party, wronged as I am out of a home, long promised to me by my son, and since his death the promises were renewed all last summer & Winter, and the last thing that Brigham said to me was, I should have a home and be provided for, in all my wants and I think now if he were here he would not do as you have done, but you restrict my conscience, put limits to my affections, threaten me with poverty, if I do not drive my children from my doors because they resent insultance and abuse, that has been heaped upon them without measure. But I grieve for them. I am old, my feelings are tender. Yet I must not complain. No. Although my children have been the fathers & founders of the church and spent their all in its service, yea have not witheld their lives, but have been sacrificed on the altar of Mobocracy and at the fiat of wicked men have been torn from their widowed Mother. This is not enough but I am called upon to banish from my home the few of my family who are left as my only solace *as you so Proudly & wickedly ask me to do*,* or my support shall be witheld from me, but thank kind heaven that has implanted in my bosom affection which Gold cannot buy, and which bribes cannot break. The cords of affection that bind me to the children of my bosom even eternity itself cannot break, they are interwoven with the finest Arteries of my heart & the love that flows through them is the only principle that enlivens & cheers me in this vale of tears. You would have me forsake my children in order that you may give me a living but let it not be said that in the church of Jesus christ of L.D.S. a mother has to forfeit all natures ties, to cut assunder the cords of affection that bind her to her children, or she shall not have a subsistence. Tell it not to the world, nor let it *be** heard amongst natures sons of the forest. I think no christian Spirit could have dictated such cold charity to *me or any** one who merits other treatment. A headless body has no life you say, but it may have pockets into which the head when in its place put the means of my subsistence. I do look for help some way. Provide me a house and do as you think best, if I suffer more my God will plead my cause, something must be done for Spring is coming on. As to the head of the church I am mother & ask obedience to the law of God, and all will be right and none that feel as Joseph did will wrong his Mother, his Brother or his sisters. What is done I would like to have done immediately. Give me a deed to a house and lot and advance the Quarterly sum. A part of my family have left me today & I expect William to be gone soon & he will go and come as the Lord directs him. I wish to be cultivating a Garden soon. I have no means, no food, but coarse corn meal and I am old and feeble in health. Will you call and see me & talk on these affairs. As to W^{m} he is my son and he has rights.

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* The words italicized are inserted in another hand.

As to the Twelve you say they have rights, but who shall decide between them. Are you the judge. The Twelve speak against William & William speaks in his own defence. You say he slanders them, he says, they have slandered him and robbed him of his rights, *and dire other things as well*,* but I shall leave these things with one who is a just God and will measure to all men their just deserts in the day of accounts. As to the merits of my children none are more worthy to have an inheritance in the city of Joseph and you are now living on the labour of their hands. I will not speak of this further as it excites my tender feelings, to think that any should be so heartless as consider that after their labors for years in sickness in persecution in perils by sea & land & suffering privations and the loss of all things to protect the Prophet my son and build up the kingdom of God, and now they are not worthy of an inheritance. O shame where is thy blush? Let this be a sufficient rebuke from your Mother in Israel. Amen

LUCY SMITH Mother in Israel

PS Can it be possible that I shall be driven to the necessity of calling upon others or looking to another source for help. God forbid

Appended: This is nearly a copy of the letter sent to the Trustees, it may not be the same words but the sentiments are exactly the same W. S.

Endorsed: Copy Letter sent to Trustees &c

Letter of Lucy Smith Mother in Israel to the Brighamite Trustees in answer to a proposition from them that she could have her inheritance only on condition that her son William should not be admitted to her house

VIII

Memorial of April 6, 1850

MEMORIAL.

To the President and Congress of the United States, and to all the People of the Nation—We, JAMES J. STRANG, GEORGE J. ADAMS, *and* WILLIAM MARKS, *Presidents of the Church of the Saints, Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Witnesses of His Name unto all Nations, and others, our Fellow Servants, send Greeting:—*

IT is twenty years this day since our brethren, the prophets and saints of God, organized the only church existing, solely by commandment and revelation of God, now on the earth. A few months subsequent to that organization a few of our brethren went up into the western part of Missouri, one of the States of this union, and commenced a settlement there.

Agreeable to a commandment which God gave them, they purchased large quantities of lands of the government of the United States, and paid the full price therefor to the officers of the United States, the ministers of your predecessors in office. Upon these lands our brethren, the saints, made extensive settlements, continually showing themselves the most industrious, peaceable and law-abiding citizens of that section of the country. At the time of which we speak no one among them was accused of any violation of the law, or a want of attachment to the constitution and government of the United States, or of the State of Missouri.

Notwithstanding these facts, and the legal rights of our brethren, a numerous meeting of citizens of Missouri was held at Independence, in that State, which decreed the expulsion of the saints from *that part* of the State. This meeting issued a *manifesto* to the public, giving *to the world the reasons* for *banishing from their neighborhood* a numerous class of citizens; the entire church of the Latter Day Saints. In giving these reasons they stated that our religious sentiments and domestic habits were incongruous with theirs, and that it was necessary for their happiness that our brethren should leave; and as the grievances of which they complained were not recognized by the laws, and the saints had not violated any existing law whereby they were subject to regular prosecution in the courts, therefore they would take redress into their own hands, and compel us to leave the country, peaceably if they could, forcibly if they must. This decree was carried out by the expulsion of the saints from Jackson Co., Missouri.

They then settled in various counties on the north side of the Missouri river, but continual collisions took place, till finally they were banished from the State by authority of a mandate issued by Lillburn W. Boggs, acting Governor, distinctly commanding that the saints (in derision called Mormons) be banished from the State, or extirminated. We are perfectly aware that this mandate of the acting Governor was unauthorized by the law, and in violation of the constitution of the State of Missouri. But the Legislature of that State, in failing to impeach the Governor, and by appropriating the money *to pay the expense of executing his order*, has affirmed and adopted the act as the crime of the State. In accomplishing this expulsion *ten thousand persons, men, women and children, were plundered of their possessions, exiled from their homes, and driven in destitution, hunger and want, in mid winter, to a distant land, passing much of the way in the midst of hostile foes, who not only refused them shelter and food, but kept them in continual danger.*

Many were separated from their families and incarcerated in prison, whence, after long detention, they escaped only by paying large sums of money to prison keepers, judges and lawyers, as the price of their enlargement. Besides a feeble few, who, after learning that their persecutors were without compassion, were slain while defending their wives, their children and their firesides; eighteen persons, unarmed, and engaged in the worship of God, were murdered unresisting, and in cold blood, in the early part of these persecutions; one of them a mere child, who died mixing together the words of his prayer to God, and his supplication for mercy from his murderers; another, an old man, bowed down with suffering and sorrow, scarred with the wounds he had received fifty-seven years before in defence of American liberty and American independence; all yielding up their lives for the name of Jesus, and the witness of the gospel. Others, at different times, shared the same fate; how many, we know not.

Subsequently the saints settled in great numbers in the State of

Illinois, and built up, besides many villages, the city of Nauvoo, at one time the most populous city in that State. At their first settlement they were kindly received; but after building up flourishing towns, becoming numerous as a religious people, and strong in their political influence, religious prejudice, political interests and commercial rivalry combined to destroy them.

On this occasion our persecutors sought to justify their violence by accusing the saints of enormous crimes, and the most astounding corruptions. That these accusations were utterly unfounded is clearly shown by the fact that with courts, jurors and prosecuting officers constantly and assiduously selected from among our persecutors, few of the saints were ever prosecuted on criminal charges, and very few indeed ever convicted.

Nevertheless this persecution was carried on until our fellow servants, the prophets, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, were martyred; the houses of hundreds of the saints burned down before their eyes; the entire community amounting to 25,000 banished from *that section* of the State, and four millions of dollars worth of property sacrificed.

For all these wrongs the laws and institutions of the country offer us no redress. It is vain to answer that such acts are contrary to law, and that the courts are open to us. *There is a law in the land stronger than statutes—more potent than the usages of courts*. The will of the masses, however vicious and partial, no matter by what influences produced, has been able to *trample on all precedent, and ride down all law*. It has done more. It has produced legislation according to its wishes, in violation of all constitutional securities; and not merely contrary to precedent, but destructive of natural right.

This unrecognized law, found only in the will of the masses, has been enforced in destroying houses, offices and valuable papers of some of the most distinguished citizens of the country, public buildings of various kinds, printing presses and rail roads owned by wealthy companies, churches and convents of the most ancient and numerous religious denomination in the country, and to overthrow contracts which had stood the vicissitudes of two hundred years, the ordeal of civil war and national revolution, though defended by the sanctity of constitutional and statute law; usages older than the language we speak; and backed by an aristocracy made honorable by deeds of benevolence, justice, patriotism and valor, as boundless as the sources of its greatness.

If these cannot resist the power of this new element of national and state government mob law, how shall we? We are aware that our name is cast out as evil, as a kind of apology for the uncounted injuries which have been heaped upon us. But you will not forget that in early times among all the most polished nations the name christian was looked on as a name for fanaticism and debauchery; that the learned Greeks and victorious Romans held them cannibals, and that, even now, in half the civilized and christian nations democracy is considered synonymous with anarchy and lawlessness—how justly, you can judge.

And if the sanctity of the ancient christian faith, and the greatness of your nation have not protected them from these aspersions, what shall protect us from equal wrongs? We protest against this nearly universal practice of assuming that we are guilty of great crimes, as an excuse for denying us the regular protection of the government in our legal rights. But when we examine the evidence of the truth of these assumptions, they are most conclusively falsified.

Joseph, the martyred prophet, whose blood stains on the jail at Carthage are as indelible as those of Jesus on the cross, has been arrested thirty-nine times on criminal charges. Thirty-nine times he has been tried in the courts of his enemies; many times at the bar of men, who advocated his murder. And thirty-eight times, in such courts, at the bar of such men, has he been acquitted.

The only offence of which he was ever convicted is that of unlawful banking—an offence committed with impunity by other men in nearly every State in the union. Nor did he escape conviction by the testimony of his brethren. Such men would stop their ears against it. If this is not a sufficient vindication of him as a law-abiding man, no array of facts could be.

That the charge on which he was finally arrested and imprisoned was merely trumped up for the purpose of seizing upon him and detaining him till a convenient time for his destruction is as clearly proved as any fact whatever in the history of the country.

And when we add that his murderers were indited, arraigned and acquitted at the instance of their own friends, without any attempt to introduce the necessary evidence against them, and merely for the purpose of interposing a *legal bar* to their punishment, in some more healthy period of the public mind, we think it will not require argument to convince all mankind that the State of Illinois has adopted that murder as its own.

There is now in the States of Missouri and Illinois four millions of dollars worth of houses and lands purchased with the money and produced with the skill and industry of our brethren the saints, which they are not permitted to occupy.

To you, as the highest authority known to the land, we appeal for redress. We have not forgotten that there are other tribunals in which causes partially similar in kind, immeasurably less in aggravation, are *sometimes* examined, *perhaps* occasionally righted. But these tribunals are closed against us, by the power of that law, already referred to, which is above statute, precedent and right.

Courts, State Legislatures, and State executives are deaf to us. When we speak, they cannot hear. When we ask justice, their faces are turned from us. True, when they do speak, their voice is for us. But it comes after the deed is done, or it is so faintly heard that the lawless do not think it earnest. The forms of law hold us as victims, and the power that is above law overwhelms us. Thus have two of our prophets died in the hands of public officers, and under the destroying protection of a State Governor, personally superintending the proceedings, and no one act of public indignation has rebuked the deed. By every form of judicial proceeding known to the laws of the land, the perpetrators have been legally shielded from the punishment which the law itself denounces against such crimes.

If you tell us (as some of your predecessors told these martyred prophets while they were yet alive) that "you have no power to redress our wrongs," then there is presented to the world the melancholy spectacle of the greatest republic on earth, a christian nation, acknowledging itself powerless to judge; unable to protect the right; a nation on whose righteousness half the earth rest the hopes of man, confessing that there is a power above the law, riding down the constitution, which stalks abroad to plunder and banish the citizens, and none to rebuke; murders the unoffending innocent, and none to say, "why do ye so?" which sanctifies its deeds of violence, even in the eyes of religious men, by blackening the fame of the glorious dead, with the name of crimes which in their life time it dared not attempt to prove, even in its own tribunals.

The fact that our brethren are the owners of large tracts of land, purchased of the United States, and secured to us by the name and seal of the President, which they have never sold, and which they are not permitted to occupy, by the powers actually existing, and that our brethren have been banished and murdered, and their persecutors are unrebuked, and positively and legally screened from punishment, is as indelibly stamped on the history of the country as the declaration of independence, or the victory of Buena Vista.

All the inferior powers have been appealed to in vain. Unless you redress these wrongs, must they rest on the nation forever, and bring down the wrath of God on those who have done, and those who have permitted them? If you fear not God, how will you answer to mankind and to posterity, for such a desecration of republicanism, in a christian country?

For these wrongs we do not ask a grant of lands, nor a State or Territorial government.—We acknowledge that we have had enough of these. We shall never sell the lands of our brethren and ourselves, the inheritance of the martyred and of their children, for new grants of which we are equally liable to be deprived by some new act of violence.

We do not ask compensation in money or land for the blood of the dead, or the persecutions of the living. The lands we have been robbed of, we shall continue to claim for the banished, and for the widows and orphans that murders have made, till the day when the judgment of God shall be revealed on the nation, and his wrath no longer slumbers; and they shall go up and possess it, though the nation ceases.

But these things admonish us that we are not to expect peace or protection in the midst of the people who have done us this iniquity. Both by the commandment of God and from the necessity of our situation, we are seeking a home in a land where religious sects and political parties are far removed from us, a land uninhabited.

We have not been suffered to live with other men. Shall we not be permitted to live alone? God made the earth for all men. Of the vast all he has given us a few little islands. They are the work of his hands; not man's. Why should man sell God's work?

We, therefore, the servants of the living God, the fellow servants of the martyred saints, ask you, the President and Congress of the United States, to pass a law giving the consent of the nation that the saints may settle upon and forever occupy all the uninhabited lands of the islands in lake Michigan, and to cease to sell the same to other persons. And of the people of the United States we ask that as they have not allowed our brethren to remain in peace with them, they will suffer us to remain there separate from them.

We further ask that you, by some public act, condemn in behalf of the nation the martyrdom of the saints and their exile from some of the States. Unless you do this, will posterity and God hold the nation guiltless of the blood of saints and prophets? What evidence has ever yet been given that the nation sanctions not the deed? How has she washed her hands of this blood?

We further ask that you take such measures, whether constitutional or by a peaceable change of the forms of government, as shall secure redress for these wrongs, and the punishment of the aggressors. Less than this there can be no excuse for doing. The government which cannot or will not prevent such crimes, does not deserve to continue; and it would be distrusting the justice of the most high to believe he would not destroy it.

As you do good or evil, God reward you.

Written at Buffalo, the 6th day of April, 1850.

JAMES J. STRANG,
GEO. J. ADAMS,
WILLIAM MARKS.

IX

Some Articles from the Northern Islander

PROTECTION OF THE LAW.*

NO fact can be more certain that that throughout the United States there is no *legal protection* to a Mormon. It may occasionally happen that the law is administered in their behalf, but much more frequently it is not. The few cases where the law is administered in their favor, only show that there is no protection for them. They are only cases of little consequence where it is not worth the trouble of denying the usual course of legal proceedings.

A large number of the Mormons have been murdered at different times and in different States by persons well known, and whose guilt could be proved by multitudes of witnesses, yet no person has ever been punished for the murder of any of them. We are not speaking of persons killed while defending their wives, their children, and their firesides, but of unarmed persons murdered outright, and for whose murder the only pretense of excuse was, that they were Mormons.

At one time some eighteen persons, engaged in the worship of God, were murdered in cold blood, unresisting. Joseph and Hyrum Smith were murdered in prison, on a charge confessedly trumped up for the purpose of getting them where it was convenient to murder them —the murderers in both cases being well known, and not the slightest effort has been made by the legally constituted authorities to bring them to justice. In the cases of the murderers of Joseph and Hyrum the most prominent actors were indicted and acquitted, for the purpose of preventing any prosecution which at any future time might be attempted.

Last fall prophet Strang was imprisoned for the same purpose, but the object failed through the efforts of a few men, too just to be corrupted to such purposes. Nevertheless, Mr. Strang and various others, including all the principal men among the Mormons, live in the continual consciousness that there are men around them seeking their lives; and that should they be killed, the murderers would never be brought to justice by the authorities of the State.

* Issue of April 3, 1851.

We are not aware that they are in any particular fear of being murdered, but there is something very rotten in the institutions of the country, when men of respectability and of peaceful and industrious habits must live with the assurance that whoever pleases may murder them, and never be called to account for it. And it can add nothing to their comfort to know there are men in their neighborhood who seek their lives.

Under such circumstances it behooves men to consider their position well, and to act with spirit and decision. A little hesitation or indecision is as much as life is worth, and we are happy in believing that in this case there will be none. Messrs. Strang, Miller, Graham, Aldrich, McCulloch, Johnson, Hopper, Chidester, Greig, and others, the men marked for destruction, will not huddle up like frightened sheep, and turn their backs to be destroyed by a chance blow. They will not suffer their numbers to be picked out one by one to suffer the malice of evil doers.

Every man may dismiss all such expectations at once, and forever. The Mormons will be crushed as a people, and swallowed in one common ruin, sooner than attempt to gain a temporary respite by sacrificing one another. They have sought for legal protection till they have learned that it is not for them—They have retreated from persecution as the Indian has from the white man till they have learned that there is no retreat for them. They can fall back no farther. If the administrators of the law will not protect them, they will take care of themselves.

We are induced to make these remarks in consequence of information that Mr. Praiseworthy Bower has offered to join a band if one can be got up, and burn down the houses of some twenty of the Mormons of Beaver Island and Mr. Thomas Bennett expresses a determination to have the life of Mr. Strang before another harvest. We do not expect them to do any such thing and are quite easy on the subject of all such threats.

But our confidence is not in the sanctity of the law, for we well know it has none. It is in the certainty that should such an aggression be committed, the aggressors would be wiped off the face of the earth, before they found rest for the soles of their feet. It is not safe to have such men left in our vicinity. They will forever be seeking to excite hostilities, and will never be at rest, while their neighbors are at peace; and if suffered to remain among us will contrive by some means to put an end to the good feeling prevailing among the community here.

But the facts of which we speak are not peculiar to us as a people. This lawlessness is practiced on the weak and defenceless throughout the United States. The tendency of all things is, to despising the laws and those that administer them. No great interest or valuable right is safe because it is legal. The owners of legal franchises are never at rest on the assurance of the laws. They depend on making themselves strong by political combinations rather than constitutional rights. Equally those who wish to exercise prerogatives forbidden in the law, move forward disregarding all statutes and legal precedents, if backed by sufficient influence to trample down the law.

Many have looked for the downfall of the nation by the array of the North against the South. That will not be. The nation will perish in the anarchy of laws despised and trampled on by the whole people. There is no wickedness, no act of oppression ever undertaken by a despotic government, which has not been successfully accomplished in this. There is no conceivable act which cannot be done under it, either in accordance with the law, or in spite of it. The most influential men in society, are many of them engaged in the constant and shameless violation of penal statutes and criminal enactments, without so much as being less respected. The end of all this can be nothing less than the despising of magistrates, the trampling on law, and the crumbling in pieces of the government.

All the old governments have a kind of heart; a body of people, generally among the most intelligent, who have a permanent interest in the integrity and respectability of the administration; men whose standing, property and even their personal safety depend on a respectable share of justice in the administration; and who at the same time control its affairs. In the United States there is no such class. Whoever administers the government for the time being is sure of being turned out in a short time to an obloquy equally sure whether deserved or undeserved. Their utmost interest is in the amount they can speculate out of the administration of public affairs. In the election the voice of the vicious counts equally with that of the virtuous. Such institutions must fail of accomplishing any good and in the end must perish. Injustice and oppression is their natural fruit.

ANOTHER OUTRAGE. HUNTING MORMONS LIKE WILD BEASTS. EMPLOYING INDIANS FOR A POSSE.*

THE O'Malley clique have commenced a new persecution of the saints at this place, with the aid of Mr. Granger, Sheriff of Mackinac county, but we believe without any aid or encouragement from any respectable part of the community. The process of persecution is a descent upon Beaver by the Sheriff with criminal warrants against thirty-eight persons, backed by a posse of thirty *intoxicated Indians*, and eight or ten drunken Irishmen armed with guns.

Such an assault has a publick officer made upon the peaceable inhabitants of this place, without one act of resistance, and before the slightest attempt was made to execute his process. Among the very grave charges upon which men are thus hunted like wild beasts by savages and drunken Irish, we are informed that Mr. Samuel Graham is charged with the very grave offence of standing by while somebody had some unpleasant words, and *not interfering*.

Mr. Charles M. O'Malley is the Justice to issue warrants on such charges, and Mr. Sheriff Granger is the man to take every third man in [the] community on such pretences, and carry them fifty miles from home to be tried by an Irish bog trotter, who has declared beforehand that he will regard no testimony in their behalf.

Some of the prisoners when taken into custody, were put in charge of the vilest drunken scoundrels that can be found on the wild borders, who were suffered to beat, abuse and threaten them at pleasure. They even went so far as to gather a rabble around Mr. Joshua L. Miller, who asserted with many assurances that the party who had been sent to arrest his father, Gen. Geo. Miller, when he was at work in the woods, had murdered him, and exhibited some portion of his clothing which they prepared for the purpose, as evidence of the truth of the assertion.

From time to time the Indians were despatched off in large parties, drunk, and well supplied with arms and ammunition, and led by such worthless wretches as Jim Lambert, to hunt over the adjacent Islands, on which it was supposed, that some of their victims might be found; and Mr. Sheriff Granger, hearing the savages boast how

* Issue of May 1, 1851.

many white men's scalps they had taken, and that now they would have Mr. Strang's also, sent them on their errands of blood.

Such a perversion of ministerial administration; such a prostitution of the powers of office to the purposes of crime, was never heard of in a civilized community. Let the citizens of the United States take this matter home to themselves. Let them imagine a tribe of wild savages, first made drunk, then provided with arms and ammunition, and then let loose on the peaceable inhabitants of a town, with authority to make prisoners of all the town officers and principal public men, having them whooping about your houses and swearing death against the men they are ostensibly sent to arrest, and you have but a faint picture of the scene that Mr. Sheriff Granger has created for his malignant pleasure upon Beaver Island.

Whether this new outrage will meet with any rebuke from the publick press, or the constituted authorities, we have yet to see. Certainly we have seen nothing in the past to assure us that it will. Last fall the most vicious statements were made in many political papers, charging us with gross frauds in the election of the Hon. J. P. Irvine to the Legislature, and of the county officers. A Legislative investigation was had, in which we had no opportunity to offer one word of testimony, and yet the Legislature treated the complaint against us as merely ridiculous. Not one of all the papers that made and reiterated the accusations has retracted them.

We have a right to presume that in this case rumour, not on the wings of the wind but in the columns of the newspapers, will accuse us of a thousand crimes, and when a legal investigation vindicates us of all, not one word of rebuke will be heard for the false accusation—none for hunting us like so many wild beasts.

If the Mormons were really guilty of high crimes, this mode of proceeding against them is a violation of all law and of the principles of civilized government. It is the duty of the Sheriff, his officers and the posse comitatus, to protect as well as arrest the accused, and herein is the obligation of *non-resistance*. But in this case the Sheriff, instead of calling on the power of the county to arrest resisting culprits, calls on a tribe of Indians to murder those who do not resist an arrest, and have never shown the slightest disposition to do so.

And what is the crime for which the lives of a whole community are thus put in jeopardy? Nothing but going with a Constable to assist in arresting a criminal with arms in his hands. Mr. Constable Field went with a few of his neighbours to arrest E. J. Moore on a criminal process. Moore with his friends, after firing several guns upon the Constable's party without effect, escaped to the woods, and fled to Mackinac, where he obtained warrants against them for that act, and that is the head and front of their offending. That is the crime for which the Mormons are hunted like wolves.

We appeal to the sympathies of humanity—to the common feelings of the human heart against such wickedness. But we do not appeal as men begging for favours. We only ask some approximation to justice. And if we are not to have it, we only wish to be told so. We are able to take care of ourselves, by the help of God. If it is a settled principle that officers exist in this region not to protect but to murder us, we wish to be told so distinctly, and we will look to the rest.

DEATH OF THOMAS BENNETT.*

THE death of this individual has been published in nearly all the periodical papers of the country and by a large portion of them spoken of as a cold-blooded and unprovoked murder.

It is in reference to this mistaken view of the matter that we now speak of it. We shall give a brief history of the transactions preceding the attempt to arrest Bennett, which are necessary to a proper understanding of the matter.

Some time near the last of May Mr. Samuel Graham went to Whiskey Point to have an interview with Sheriff Granger. A few moments after arriving there, and while approaching a house where Granger was, Richard O'Donnell and James Hoy passed him, and as he passed by one of them struck him with a heavy cane. Graham received the blow on his arm and it broke the bone.

He then seized the ruffian with the other hand, but the other antagonist took the cane and struck Graham over the head and brought him down. They then alternately beat him with the cane, each crying, "kill him, damn him," as the other struck. Before they were taken off his skull was fractured and his head dreadfully mutilated. It has been stated in numerous papers that there had been a previous quarrel between Graham and O'Donnell and Hoy, and that on this occasion Graham commenced the violence. Both statements are untrue. There had been no previous quarrel, and on this occasion Graham had not so much as spoken to them.

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* Issue of August 14, 1851.

For this offence warrants were issued successively, first by James M. Greig County Judge and subsequently by M. M. Aldrich, Justice of the Peace, and put into the hands of Sheriff Granger and he refused to execute them. And this refusal was not on the ground of any informality of the warrants, nor on the last was it pretended. He refused to execute the first, giving as a reason, that it had not the county seal.

But such warrants never have it. But in regard to the warrant issued by Mr. Aldrich, and which was carefully drawn up by an able lawyer, he declared that he would execute *no warrant* issued by a magistrate who was a Mormon, or issued upon complaint of a Mormon. Thus the Mormons were denied legal protection by the officers of the law.

They then petitioned the Prosecuting Attorney to prosecute the offenders at Mackinac; wishing to have nothing to do with either arresting or judging the offenders. But he with his usual fearlessness and faithfulness to duty, determined to vindicate the integrity of the law on the spot. He came to this place and directed the proceedings, that all might be done with exact legal precision. A warrant issued by M. M. Aldrich, Justice of the Peace, was put into the hands of Wm. Chambers, Constable, for the arrest of O'Donnell and Hoy, and he went up on to the fishing ground to arrest them, accompanied by three men, all unarmed.

As they approached Bennett's place, which they had to pass in going for O'Donnell and Hoy, the Bennetts stopped them, and with guns in their hands drove them back; telling them that all the fishermen on those grounds, represented to be sixty in number, would rally at the signal of *three guns*, and they had bound themselves together that no one should be taken by an officer, and they would not give up while one remained alive.

The Constable returned to the Justice and stated these facts on oath, and he issued his warrant for the arrest of Samuel and Thomas Bennett for resisting an officer in the discharge of his official duties. The Constable with this and the warrant against O'Donnell and Hoy summoned a posse; but *the men would not go.* He went to the prosecuting Attorney for advice, and he told him to summon a sufficient posse and put down the name of every man who refused to aid him, and he would prosecute them.

Mr. Chambers went around the second time to call the power of the county to his aid, and succeeded in raising a force of between thirty and forty men, and with them went up to the fishing grounds to arrest the two Bennetts, O'Donnell and Hoy. On approaching Bennett's the Constable, leaving most of his party behind went forward, and as he approached the house they shut the door. He spoke to them through the window, explained his business, told them the instructions he had received from the Prosecuting Attorney, and urged them to desist from any act of violence, and to go peaceably with him. They refused with oaths, imprecations and threats.

As he drew back to call on his posse, they shot at him. Three guns were fired, and one of them brought down the constable, and upon that the fire was returned and when resistance ceased Thomas Bennett was found dead and Samuel wounded.

Not an act was done by the constable or his posse but what was necessary to the enforcement of the law. Had the officer done less, he would have been charged as recreant to his duty, and faithless to his oath of office.

Upon this Hoy took to the woods, and made his escape. O'Donnell took a boat and put out on the lake, and a part of the posse pursued. As they approached him, he took deliberate aim at one of them with his rifle and threatened to shoot if they advanced. Three rifles were instantly brought to bear upon him and the boat went on, till the man at the bow seized O'Donnell's rifle by the muzzle. From this time resistance ceased and we may add that but for the avidity with which newspapers at a distance seized upon and repeated false tales concerning the transaction, it would have put an end to all further attempts at lawlessness here.

As it is, a constable can go alone to the fishing grounds and arrest any person charged with crime. The magistrates are treated with as much respect as any in the state; and in the progress of law and order, since Mr. Strang has come into office as Justice of the Peace, even the fishermen come to him to right their wrongs.

All that has been said about brutality in the post mortem examination is utterly without foundation. Nor was there any malice shown or felt on the part of those engaged in the transaction. It was a mere act of vindication of the lawful authority of the state of Michigan in Mackinac County. Such every legal investigation will show it.

PRISONERS OF HOPE.*

THERE are now residing on Beaver Island thirty persons who have in a little more than a year been committed to prison on criminal charges, from one to six times. The whole number of commitments against these persons is forty-five, and the aggregate period of their imprisonment is 1379 days, or nearly four years time.

Besides these commitments some sixty other persons have been arrested on various criminal charges, making upwards of ninety persons arrested in a single township on more than two hundred criminal charges, and not one convicted.

Mr. Strang leads the list, having been six times imprisoned, charged in fourteen indictments and taken in custody on forty criminal charges in less than one year: beginning with treason, and ending with trespass. Dr. McCulloch has been committed five times, charged in thirteen indictments, and arrested on twenty criminal charges.

The following persons were charged with murder, and excepting the first two detained in prison ten weeks. H. D. McCulloch, Chauncey Loomis, Geo. Brownson, Gurdon Brown, Saml. Shaw, A. Parrish, John Whitlock, Tobias McNutt, Albert Field, G. T. Preston, Orson Campbell, Eli Steele, Judson Linnell, Stratton Rogers, and Murray Seaman.

Among those arrested on this and various other charges, James Smith and John Prince, late of Pittsburgh, F. Johnson, late from Baltimore, J. M. Greig, late from Brighton, M. M. Aldrich, late from Wayne Co., Mich., Phineas Wright, late from Potosi, Wis., Dennis Chidester Esq., Otsego Co., N. Y., J. L. Miller, San Antone, Texas, and Warren Post, late of Centerville, Crawford Co., Pa., are included. We appeal to all who have been acquainted with these men, whether it is credible that they could commit such crimes. The character of these men, where they are known, is as good a vindication as we wish for. But beyond that, such a vast number of arrests without a single conviction ought to satisfy our most violent enemies that we are maligned and falsely accused.

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* Issue of March 18, 1852.

SAINT JAMES, BEAVER ISLAND. THURSDAY, SEPT. 2, 1852.*

READ this tale:

There is, most people are aware, a gang of men—a branch of the Mormon Church—under the management of one Strang, settled at Beaver Island, in the straits of Mackinac. Recently many complaints have reached us from that quarter—especially from fishermen—in regard to the outrages perpetrated by these Islanders. It would seem that the narrow escape some of them had about a year ago from the halters of justice has not produced a good effect on them, but on the contrary made them more annoying, and paved the way for fresh crimes and outrages. They have now driven off all the fishermen from the Island, stolen most of their property, and make a business of appropriating whatever they can lay hands on belonging to the boats which call there.

It would be hard to believe there were such things occurred every day, were it not that we have it from the most reliable sources, and from many witnesses whom we feel confident are incapable of uttering a falsehood in reference to the matter.

The Mormons, when a boat touches at their Island, flock down to the dock with arms, loaded and ready for action. They have a paper called the *Northern Islander*, devoted to the peculiar interests of the Latter Day Saints of Beaver Island, which is very industrious in manufacturing public opinion upon affairs connected with the Island and its inhabitants. The most atrocious falsehoods are unblushingly promulgated by the paper and sworn to by the Saints, and the most malicious reports concerning some of the first steamboat officers on the lakes find places in its columns.

It has just recovered from an attack of paralysis brought on from overheating itself in an attack upon the officers of the steamer *J. D. Morton* which always touches at Beaver Island on her way to and from Green Bay. It politely intimates that Capt. Watts and all the other officers of the *Morton* are thieves and pirates, and all that sort of thing, and all because the Islanders are not permitted to go on board and steal all about deck. Something should be done to check the highhanded proceedings of this piratical band of desperadoes before they become any more troublesome. A wholesome restraint should be imposed upon them by some government officer appointed for that purpose; they should be made to respect the rights of fishermen as well as of travelers. Of course all they say against the officers of the *Morton* will not have the value of a hair in the estimation of the traveling public. We do not refer to the matter on that account. *Rough Notes*, July 27.

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* Issue of September 9, 1852.

And now this:

We have received two numbers of a weekly paper called the *Northern Islander*, published at St. James, Beaver Island, Lake Michigan, and devoted to the interests of Strang—an apostate of several years standing from the main trunk of Mormonism—and his followers. It may be remembered that we published an article in relation to the Beaver Islanders, about four or five weeks since. The editor of the *Northern Islander* says he received one of our papers with the following direction upon the wrapper: "James J. Strang, Mormon King, by God, sir"; and the Editor adds, in the true spirit of Christian charity, that we "evidently intended to have said, by grace of God, sir." He thinks to entertain a suspicion of our being profane were uncharitable. We humbly beg the pardon of all the Beavers, but the truth is, we never sent, nor caused to be sent to any person on their Island any copy of our paper. We have no cause for quarrel with any Mormon in Christendom, and if the Editor will please refer to our article he will observe that we said if the reports in circulation in regard to them were true, etc., they had been highly culpable, and the case should undergo legal investigation. We referred to the difficulties existing between the Islanders and the officers of the *Morton*, stating what we had been told by unprejudiced passengers on the *Morton*.

If we were satisfied that we had maligned the Mormons, we should be as quick to render them justice as any other class of men. We are free from any feeling of prejudice against them. Yet to us at a distance from the scene of operations, these things wear an entirely different aspect from what they do to one who is an immediate observer. We entertain no doubt but the Mormons have been put upon, perhaps maligned, but when their organ claims for them what can be said of no other class in the world—that they are guilty of no transgressions whatever, and that all these stories are manufactured, we say gammon. Allow that the lusts of the flesh and the seeking after filthy lucre may have led some of even your immaculate body astray, and we will drop the subject, so far as we are concerned, without a sigh. We would say to the *Islander* that we are coming up to spend a couple of weeks with them before the close of navigation, and shall expect them to give us a friendly shake of the hand betimes. *Id.* August 19.

The Editor of the *Rough Notes* never sent a paper to any person on this island, and therefore did not send the address "James J. Strang, Mormon King, by God, sir." Very well. Then this profanity lies at the door of the "very *gentlemanly* officers of the *Morton*" who brought the paper from the office, *in an office envelope*, with such a direction written on the paper itself before enclosing.

Put that in your paper, Mr. *Rough Notes*, send it along to the Green Bay *Spectator*, and you two may puff the *very gentlemanly* officers of the *Morton* to your heart's content. Give the public the facts. They will know then what in your estimate makes a *gentleman*.

And the *Rough Notes* has "no quarrel with any Mormon in Christendom," though he expressly asserts that "they have driven off all the fishermen from the Island, and stolen most of their property"—"that the most unblushing falsehoods are promulgated by their paper, and sworn to by them"—and that "the narrow escape some of them had from the Halter of Justice, has made them more annoying, and paved the way for fresh crimes."

In the name of truth, with whom do you quarrel but the innocent and the unoffending? No quarrel with such men: God deliver the innocent and unoffending from the society of your friends.

You must be kin to a merchant who wished to establish [himself] at Saint James, and offered as an inducement to the Mormons to patronize him, to purchase all the fish they would steal at a very slight reduction on the market price. Finding no customers on *such* terms, he is now engaged in trying to get us mobbed off, in hopes of speculating out of the plunder of our property.

With such sentiments, we had rather you would not come up to visit us. If you have no quarrel with us, having that opinion, a little acquaintance would make one; and if you have no such opinion, and have merely called us thieves, pirates, &c., to please the "very gentlemanly officers of the *Morton*," the least we can say is, don't shake hands with such.

In all candor, Mr. *Rough Notes*, we do not believe such things would be said by you and other journalists, if you gave them one sober thought before putting them in type. Editors know their readers have itching ears for ill news of the Mormons. They are sometimes willing to gratify a man who can give them a free passage, &c., by saying things to please him, the truth of which they have never investigated, and do not consider that though it is sport to them, it is death to us.

This course of misrepresentation has been pursued towards the inhabitants of Beaver Island, until we live here with the consciousness that any band of ruffians who should succeed in murdering any of us in the most unprovoked and cold-blooded manner would be left at large unprosecuted. On the other hand, should we resist to blood, a wicked unprovoked and murderous attack, we should be seized, imprisoned, and tried as murderers.

Last year two men by the name of Bennett fired upon and shot down a constable who went to arrest them, and after the constable fell his posse returned the fire, and one of the Bennetts was killed, and this has been published as far as the English language is spoken as a cold-blooded murder.

A thousand newspapers published that the Mormons were attempting to subject the Bennetts to *Mormon* Law, and that one of them was killed for resisting *Mormon* authority. The Editors of every one know that this *Mormon* Law was the public law of the State of Michigan, and that this *Mormon* authority was a Prosecuting Attorney, a Justice of the Peace, and a Constable in and for the County of Michilimackinac. Yet the fourth paper in the thousand cannot be found which has corrected the misrepresentation. They make us murderers rather than take back a falsehood which has been imposed on them. It may be sport to you, but it is death to us.

But the *Rough Notes* says: "When the Mormon organ claims for them—what can be said of no other class of people in the world—that they are guilty of no transgressions whatever—we say, gammon."

Ah! then it has got down to this,—that the Mormons are *justly* *presumed* to have some imperfections, because "the lusts of the flesh and the seeking for filthy lucre" lead some astray, wherever human nature remains. If we "will allow" this, you "will drop the subject."

We allowed this before you was out of petticoats, and have continued to confess it to the present hour. We allege in behalf of our religion that its tendency is to make men better. But no man among us pretends to impeccability. Nor has the Editor of the *Rough Notes* ever seen or heard one word from us claiming individual perfection to any men, save "the man Christ Jesus."

It is not these "some imperfections" which you accused us of in the *Rough Notes* of July 27th. You accuse us of the most astounding crimes which ever disgraced the human name, and allege the most unimpeachable authority. Either you have such authority, or you have not. We undertake to say you have not.

You charge "that the Mormons have drove off all the fishermen from Beaver Island." Mr. Cadwallader, will you tell us the names of the fishermen who have been driven off Beaver Island? If they have been driven they have names, and your respectable informants can tell what they are. If you do not tell, it is because the statement that any have been drove is a deliberate falsehood.

You charge the Mormons with "stealing most of the fishermen's property." A pile of plunder that would be. Name a thing, one single article, that Mormons have laid felonious hands on, or stand self-convicted of a most foul slander.

You charge "that when steamboats come into Beaver Harbor the Mormons flock down on to the docks armed and ready for action," and allege the authority of steamboat passengers. Mr. Cadwallader, you cannot name one respectable man who will ever say he saw *one* Mormon go armed upon a dock when a steamboat was there or approaching. It is false as hell. The thing was never done.

Name the boat that was ever so approached. Name the witness who asserts it. One hundred steamboats have called at our docks this season. The *Michigan*, the *Lady*, the *Sciota*, the *Ohio*, the *Troy*, seldom pass without stopping. Nearly every boat that runs upon this Lake touches occasionally. The officers of the boats are frequently in Buffalo. If there is one word of truth in what you have asserted, you can inquire of them and get the evidence.

But you will never ask them the question. When you made the assertion you knew it false. You are not near enough a fool to believe its truth possible. It is a deliberate falsehood, said against men far away, to please the officers of the steamer *Morton*. It is sport to them; it may be to you; but it is death to us.

Mr. Cadwallader doubtless values his own testimony and his own reputation for truth and veracity as high as any man's. He has charged the Mormons with a long catalogue of the most enormous crimes that ever damned to infamy the human name and a successful career of wickedness, which if true, makes them the most bold, the most desperately daring, and the most successful band of robbers that ever pirated on land or sea; and he alleges the highest authorities for all these assertions. And in his apologetic article he drops down to this: "Allow that the lusts of the flesh and the seeking after filthy lucre may have led some of your immaculate body astray,—and we will drop the subject." That is, for all your charges against us you rest upon the mere presumption that among the common errors of mankind we have some share.

Yet you argue that all the stories against us cannot be manufactured. Cannot other men manufacture stories as well as you? Are not others as expert and as reckless in publishing falsehoods? And if your assertions are all "gammon," may not theirs also be?

One other remark of the *Rough Notes* calls for a passing note: "It would seem that the narrow escape some of the Mormons had about a year ago from the halter of justice, has not produced a good effect on them."

We are aware, Mr. Cadwallader, that the Mormons tried in the United States District Court at Detroit, went to trial prejudged and foredoomed. And how narrow their escape was from judicial murder, we know better than you. The opinion has been generally expressed, both among our friends and enemies, that but for the uprightness of one man we should have been utterly overwhelmed.

Now you will remember they were indicted for robbing the United States mail, the 18th day of Feb. 1851—charged with going out armed, in a body, and attacking the mail train on the ice in front of the Indian village, Garden Island.

Now, Mr. Cadwallader, out of the same two hundred witnesses sworn on that trial, except the prosecutors themselves, not a man could be found who would say that he ever heard of the thing till the month of May following.

Mr. McKinley, the prosecuting assistant P.M. on that trial, swore upon his solemn oath, that the Mormons (the prisoners at the bar) did attack the mail train and attempt to take the mail; and yet, upon his cross examination he testified that in April following, on the opening of navigation, he entrusted that same mail to the Mormons, to be carried to Mackinac, on the schooner *Dolphin*, owned and navigated by the Mormons, and none but Mormons aboard; and that every mail but one which he sent from the office for a period of eight months, coming down to the commencement of that prosecution, he sent by the hands of the Mormons. There is not one man living within one hundred miles of here who believes that any attempt was made on the mail, or ever believed it.

Even McKinley acknowledged on his cross examination, that at his own instance a company of thirteen white men and thirty-five Indians came to St. James the day following the affair at Garden Island, and had an interview with Mr. Strang, to remonstrate with him for the Mormons going there to arrest one Eri J. Moore on that occasion; and that during an interview of three hours, attended with angry vituperation and threats against the Mormons, no one accused them of meddling with the mail. Not a soul mentioned it at all.

And these are a very few out of the hundred facts surrounding that prosecution, all showing that the charge was merely trumped up, without one solitary fact on which to found it; licked into shape like a new born cub, by an U.S. District Attorney, and supported solely and alone upon the oaths of witnesses, paid for falsehood deeper than hell, out of public funds from the Treasury of the United States.

MURDEROUS ASSAULT—ATTACK ON SHERIFF MILLER—SIX MEN WOUNDED.*

YESTERDAY morning Sheriff Miller left Galilee for Pine River to summon Jurors for the Circuit Court to be held at this place next week. When he left here the evening previous he was accompanied by only a boat's crew of five men. But at Galilee, learning that new threats had been given out at Pine River of killing any man who should attempt *to serve any kind of process there*, he took another boat and crew and went over *unarmed*, believing that the presence of that number of witnesses would prevent any act of violence until his business was explained, when he reasonably believed no objection would be made.

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* Issue (extra) of July 14, 1852.

The Sheriff arrived at 2 o'clock P.M. and within twenty-five minutes performed his duty and got into his boats with his party to return; when they were immediately fired upon by a party of armed men some fifty in number, and the firing continued until they had shoved off and rowed beyond the range of their guns.

The Pine River people immediately manned three boats and gave chase. The leading boat in chase contained twenty-five men. There was a light wind at the time, and while it lasted the Sheriff and his party kept out of reach of the guns, but when the wind died down, about ten miles out, it rapidly approached and renewed the firing, which continued for five miles when the Sheriff and his party made the Bark *Morgan*, Capt. Stone, and the pursuers hauled off and returned. The two other boats in pursuit were nearly a mile behind.

In this murderous assault more than two hundred guns were fired, all within short range, yet not a man was killed, and only six wounded.

As the Sheriff approached the landing, numerous armed men were seen running about and guns were fired apparently as signals for a general rally. As some trifling depredations had recently been committed by two or three men from Pine River at Galilee, it was supposed that this rally was to prevent an arrest of the offenders. And having no process for the arrest of any person and no business except the summoning of jurors, no uneasiness was felt on account of it.

The party landed upon a narrow beach covered with a dense growth of timber and bushes. Several men came around with menacing words and manner, but appeared partially satisfied on learning the Sheriff's business. Armed men were constantly gathering on the bluff above, and as the party were ready to embark and return a body of thirty filed down a narrow path, with their guns in their hands and formed in a row on the beach by the boats. In the intervening time three men had been down to the boats, and as they returned one of them was heard to say "they have no guns."

The boats were but just shoved off, and the last man climbing in, when the firing commenced, within thirty feet. A considerable surf was breaking on the shore, and it was difficult to get the boats off. The men had to stand up in full view and shove off using their oars for setting poles. The raking fire of thirty men on the beach and a plunging fire from probably an equal number on the bluff, sent the balls like hailstones about them until they got beyond the range. All the wounds were received here. Isaac Pierce kept his feet, working with a setting pole with one hand, the other arm swinging about with both bones broken, until he sank down with the loss of blood, and A. J. Porter kept his seat and steered the boat for miles after a ball entered back of the hip joint and passing lengthwise of the limb lodged in the hollow if the knee.

That they were not all slain: that a single one escaped alive is an extraordinary instance of the care of God for his creatures. The men on shore knew from the beginning that there was nothing to oppose them; that they had only to shoot the Sheriff's party down like sheep in a yard, and therefore took deliberate aim. Nothing but the power of the Almighty could have saved them from utter destruction. The intention evidently was to murder them all, there on the beach, and the pursuit was kept up so great a distance, undoubtedly, that there might be no witnesses to testify of the crime.

Wounded.—Isaac Pierce, left arm shot through below the elbow, breaking both bones. It is now doing well and there is every prospect that the arm will become sound.

A. J. Porter, severe flesh wound, a large ball passed lengthwise the thigh nearly to the knee. Doing well, but will be laid up several weeks.

Andrew J. Hale, shot through under the shoulder joint cutting the main artery. He was near bleeding to death, but is now able to walk about.

J. T. Pierce has a rifle ball flattened against the hip bone.

Alexander Wentworth and Lewis Briggs have each a shot hole through the flesh of the left arm.

The following escaped uninjured: Joshua L. Miller Sheriff; Franklin Johnson, Lorenzo Tubbs, Orlando P. Briggs, L. D. Hickey, David Finch, Egbert Carpenter, Christopher Scott, and F. W. Longfield.

The whole party returned to Galilee the night of the same day they set out, and early this morning Dr. H. D. McCulloch reached there and dressed their wounds.

The Indians at Pine River took no part in the attack. On the other hand they informed Sheriff Miller that the men there intended to kill him; advised him not to go up from the beach, but to re-embark immediately, because the men were gathering, and they were too many for him, and determined to kill him.

Neither the Sheriff or his men were armed. There were only four guns with them, and those only such as are commonly used for fowling. To avoid any show of hostility, before reaching Pine River these were laid in the bottom of one of the boats and covered with the men's coats. They were not taken up nor seen by any one while at Pine River. Cable and two others residing at Pine River went down to the boats and reported to their comrad[e]s, "they have no guns," and it was not till this report that a company of sixty men having a bluff and timber for shelter ventured to attack fifteen, standing in open view, unarmed.

We know not where to look for a parallel to an act so cowardly, so cold blooded and murderous, and which accomplished so little with its means.

A large number of the attacking party were recognized, and measures are being taken to bring them to justice. There would be no difficulty in fitting out a party from here who would make Pine River settlement as bare as the palm of a man's hand; but the moral effect of sending a half dozen to State Prison is worth more than the death of them all. Legal remedies are better than violent ones.

We know that those who forever seek some occasion against the Mormons, and are anxious to justify every wrong done them, will imagine some excuse for this. But when it is considered that there are seventy-five men at Pine River of known and avowed hostility to the Mormons, and the Sheriff's party consisted of but fourteen all told, and more than twenty-five miles from the nearest Mormon settlement, and therefore *could* not have sought a collision; and that the approach was six miles in sight, and the landing made in the midst of the Pine River Settlement, in open daylight at two o'clock P.M., and that the Sheriff had no business but to summon Jurors, it will be impossible for the most prejudiced to imagine any excuse for this murderous attack.

It has already been said that knowing the hostile feelings of the people at Pine River, the Sheriff ought not to have gone there to Summon Jurors. But in this matter he has no choice. He does not select the Jurors. They are drawn by the County Clerk from lists prepared by the Township officers long previous.

The fact that the Township officers in making out the Jury lists put on a due proportion of names of persons not Mormons, is an evidence that their duties were faithfully done, and that they are seeking no undue advantage to themselves, for a single Juryman can defeat a verdict. Those names being on the lists the Clerk could not prevent their being drawn, unless by corruption in office. Having been drawn it was the duty of the Sheriff to summon them. Had he neglected to do it, it would have indicated an intention to corrupt the fountains of Justice, by refusing to certain classes of citizens any place in the Jury-box. A murderous attack of this kind could not be anticipated, and therefore could be no excuse for neglecting to summon the Jurors.

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